The SPIRIT of PROTESTANTISM

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THE COLE LECTURES FOR 1930
Delivered before VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

THE SPIRIT OF PROTESTANTISM

BY

HARRIS ELLIOTT KIRK

THE COLE LECTURES

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BY
HARRIS ELLIOTT KIRK, D.D., LL.D.

MINISTER FRANKLIN STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
AND PROFESSOR OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE
IN GOUCHER COLLEGE, BALTIMORE

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THE COLE LECTURES

The late Col. E. W. Cole, of Nashville, Tenn., donated to Vanderbilt University the sum of five thousand dollars, afterwards increased by Mrs. E. W. Cole to ten thousand, the design and conditions of which gift are stated as follows:

"The object of this fund is to establish a foundation for a perpetual lectureship in connection with the School of Religion of the university, to be restricted in its scope to a defense and advocacy of the Christian religion. The lectures shall be delivered at such intervals, from time to time, as shall be deemed best by the Board of Trust; and the particular theme and lecturer will be determined by the theological faculty. Said lecture shall always be reduced to writing in full, and the manuscript of the same shall be the property of the university, to be published or disposed of by the Board of Trust at its discretion, the net proceeds arising therefrom to be added to the foundation fund, or otherwise used for the benefit of the School of Religion."

To

THE CONGREGATION OF FRANKLIN STREET
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
BALTIMORE
WHOSE LOVE, LOYALTY, AND FORTITUDE FOR
TWENTY-NINE YEARS
HAVE CONSISTENTLY SUSTAINED
MY CONFIDENCE IN
THE MINISTRY OF THE GOSPEL

"I THANK MY GOD UPON EVERY REMEMBRANCE OF YOU, ALWAYS IN EVERY PRAYER OF MINE FOR YOU ALL MAKING REQUEST WITH JOY, FOR YOUR FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL, FROM THE FIRST DAY UNTIL NOW; BEING CONFIDENT OF THIS VERY THING, THAT HE WHICH HATH BEGUN A GOOD WORK IN YOU, WILL PERFORM IT UNTIL THE DAY OF JESUS CHRIST: EVEN AS IT IS MEET FOR ME TO THINK THIS OF YOU ALL, BECAUSE I HAVE YOU IN MY HEART. PHIL. 1. 3-7.

PREFACE

The years 1929-30 mark the fourth Centenary of two crucial events having to do with the birth of Protestantism. In April, 1529, the representatives of the German people signed the historic *Protest* which gave to Protestantism its name and character. In June, 1530, the German Reform leaders submitted to the Imperial Diet the first great Protestant Creed, the Augsburg Confession, wherein they affirmed their acceptance of the Catholic Faith and their condemnation of the Roman abuses. These might well be called the chart and compass of Protestantism. It is thus peculiarly appropriate that the Cole Lectures of 1930 should be devoted to taking the bearings of our present-day Protestantism. This task is all the more urgent since there are those within the Protestant fold itself who are greatly concerning themselves with the dilemma of Protestantism and are asking, "What must the Protestant Church do to be saved?" Dr. Kirk, in his lectures, has faced very frankly not merely the dilemma of Protestantism, but the dilemma of religion itself, and has charted the way to a solution. He has

shown with a gratifying clearness how the redemptive Spirit of Protestantism furnishes a corrective for the blight of Secularism, the short-sightedness of Humanism, and the futility of a Social Gospel that discards religion. With equal clearness Dr. Kirk has shown that "a pure, undiluted Protestantism" liberates the soul from fanatical bibliolatry, mechanical ecclesiasticism, and priestly ritualism.

While this corrective and liberating feature of Dr. Kirk's lectures is a work of high order, it is not comparable in value to the constructive side of his service. He places the living Christ in the heart of all genuine Christian life and at the head of all valid Church endeavors. Dr. Kirk, in his lectures, not only advocates, but demonstrates, the indispensable value of that art of preaching which wields the divine resources of the prophetic gift. He gives a vote of confidence to those younger prophets of righteousness in the Church to-day whose spirit he describes as "relentlessly critical, daringly adventurous, and gloriously hopeful." In the midst of the chaotic confusion of our many would-be oracles, he hears the creative voice of One who not only says, "Let there be light," but, without hesitation, adds, "I am the Light of the World."

O. E. Brown,
Dean, Vanderbilt University School of Religion.

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AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

In this little book I have tried to say to the rising generation of preachers some of the things I wish some one had told me when, thirty-two years ago, I set out on the great adventure. It is an effort to reaffirm one's confidence in the redemptive gospel of Jesus Christ, as the only adequate remedy for our present spiritual distresses.

Naturally the book can make no claim to scholarship. Convictions matured in a busy parish ministry are the fruits of experience rather than the results of research; yet the book could not have been written without the aid of scholars, and I am grateful to them all. I have kept closely to the lecture form, which allows of some repetitions, because I wished to speak directly to the heroic element in the hearts of youthful volunteers for the great vocation.

I have not refrained from speaking frankly of the present captivity of the Church. I do not believe that it will take the initiative

in going on pilgrimage; but when Providence again forces it to look across the desert to Zion's broken walls, it will not lack leaders to take it there, if they be inspired by a pure and undiluted Protestantism—the spirit to live dangerously in the world, because they wholly rely on the continuous guidance of the Divine Spirit.

The temper required of leaders is that of a fully committed life. Our duty is to carry on, like men who have enlisted for the duration of the war. We must not be like the children of Reuben, who wasted their time in futile discussions beside their pleasant watercourses, but rather aspire to become like the children of Gad, who went forth to meet their destiny, expecting to be trampled upon again and again; who were often down, but never out, and, after losing many battles, finally won the war. This was the spirit of the Apostolic Church, it was the genius of the great reformers, and this is the temper that is slowly but surely forming in the younger leaders of the modern Church. It is relentlessly critical, daringly adventurous, and gloriously hopeful. Our confidence

is in them. They may be safely trusted to carry on the great tradition, now that we have fallen upon times where the very difficulties in our way inspire us with a mighty purpose to overcome them. For just beyond the present drastic experiences of the people of God there is a Future and a Hope. To many no doubt it seems but dim and faint: no matter, it is there. My hope is that this little book will help some to see it more distinctly.

I wish to acknowledge my great obligation to Misses Nancy E. Gale and Rebecca L. Boyce for assistance in the preparation of the manuscript. H. E. K.

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Baltimore, Md.

CHAPTER I

THE CONFLICT OF RELIGION WITH SECULARISM

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DANTE begins the Divine Comedy with these words: "Midway upon the journey of our life, I came to myself in a dark wood, where the right way was lost. Ah, how hard a thing to tell what this wild and rough and difficult wood was, which in thought renews my fear." He was thirty-five years old; a period when facts are more potent than ideals, when the appeal of the sense world, symbolized by the dark wood, outweighs the stimulus of a spiritual philosophy. Yet, inspired by a sturdy faith, the poet entered hell and after many adventures won his way to heaven.

We can share Dante's anxiety, for we too face a wood as dark as his; yet with the difference, that here the trails cross each other in such confusing perplexity as to make the high road of faith not so easy now. Many have parted, regretfully perhaps, with the illusion of heaven, but often find themselves

in a hell on earth as grim and fearsome as that depicted in the immortal poem. We have matured since the Great War and are now arrested by an imperious need for reflective thought. Too long we were content with understanding parts; now, for weal or woe, we must consider the whole of things. Yet, so far, our thinking has not relieved, but rather renewed our fear. The modern man has at last realized that he has lost his way. Why this is becoming characteristic of the deeper thought currents of the time, I propose to discuss in the opening chapter.

It is a common belief that ours is a religious age. Have we not churches and religious activities in abundance? Was ever an age more notable for religious scholarship? Is not religion the theme of common speech? This may be admitted: if a currency of holy words mean anything, then there is much religion abroad in the land. But when we search for a definite attachment to the living God, when we look for abiding loyalties to eternal realities, when we seek for evidence of an ineffable something of a spiritual kind inspiring and sus-

taining the human spirit, we are apt to be overtaken with misgivings.

There are many evidences of religious progress in our time. We have made original contributions to the accumulations of the past which indicate definite activity of the Divine Spirit. Yet in spite of this, the characteristic mood of the time is not repose, but uneasiness and discontent. Religion animates many organized activities. It expresses itself in moral reactions toward the tragic sense of life, or in æsthetic responses to the mystery of the universe; but of that confident communion with the Parent Source of all good life which gives repose to the human spirit in a changing world there is inadequate apprehension. There are manifold exceptions, of course, to any rule, but a frank recognition of this portentous fact is a first condition of understanding our times.

The appeal of the popular view is due to the widespread tendency to use religion for non-religious purposes. This tendency has corrupted religion in all ages. It has always been the most fascinating of intellec-

tual exercises, but no age has exceeded ours in presenting religion as a social expedient, or a sanction for law. Perhaps the most misleading abuse has been the tendency in recent times to think of religion as an agency for moral reforms. Religious interest is prevalent among those who like to oppose vague religiosity to definite attachments to some particular type of faith or institution. The modern man does not like to commit himself to anything that appears to limit his freedom. He admires religion in the large, but he is unwilling to define faith in such a way as to constrain him to adopt a particular phase of behavior. And the tendency is increasing of refusing to identify one's religious attitude with the organized Church.

The common belief that ours is a religious age must not be permitted to mislead an observant mind; for one is bound to note that when the individual is confronted by the tragic implications of life—those awakening experiences which in former times made man definitely religious—he usually seeks answers to his needs in something oth-

er than religion. And there is a want of spiritual reality, even in many of the forms of religious expression committed to some definite type of belief. The ancients once remarked: "How happy these Christians are!" It is not so easy to find this quality in modern religion. Whatever people may think, modern Christians are not always happy.

A probable explanation of the misconception of religious function is thus given by an acute observer:

> "We are drifting toward a religion which consciously or unconsciously keeps its eye on humanity rather than on Deity; which lays all the stress on service and hardly any of the stress on awe: and this is a type of religion which in practice does not wear well. It does little for the soul in those awful moments when the pain and mystery of life are most keenly felt. It does not provide a place for that profound experience which Tauler called 'suffering in God.' . . . I do not think we can deny that there is at present a definite trend in the direction of a religion of this shallow social type."[1]

[1] E. Underhill: "Concerning the Inner Life," p. 13.

But some one will say: is not a religion that concerns itself with service more useful in a world like ours than a religion based on awe and wholly engaged in preparation for another life? Are not the social and moral movements of the present, inspired as they are by the religious spirit, more in accord with the mind of Christ than private devotions of mystics or ascetic practices of saints? I am ready to admit that if the contrast lay between a religion limited to the individual and one that finds its legitimate object in service to mankind I should incline to the latter view.

But while such comparisons are common, I believe they are quite misleading. A religion that fails to express itself in the service of others is vain, but a religion that substitutes an outward and unintelligent type of service for the discipline of the human spirit is impotent and may at any time degenerate into hypocrisy. Discussions based upon this comparison lose their force in the face of the fact that modern religion is not wearing well under all conditions that prevail. Something is wrong somewhere. We

must have the courage to go beneath surface manifestations in search of fundamental trends.

It is my conviction that there has been a serious decline in religious interest in our time. By religion, I do not mean Christianity only. I am thinking of religion considered as a necessity arising from facing life in terms of destiny. Religion has been defined as "the effective desire to be in right relations with the Power manifesting itself in the universe."[2] This desire is the creative energy at the roots of all religious experience. Its universality is explained by the fact that man is aware of being dependent upon Something other than himself. The sense of dependence is present in varying degrees of intensity, at all levels of experience, and eventually develops into an imperious necessity of finding out the nature and disposition of that Something felt to be the animating spirit of the universe. Who arranges man's scheme of life? Whither is he bound? What determines

[2]Howerth. Quoted by Fowler: "Religious Experience of the Roman People," p. 8.

destiny? These are the questions at the roots of religious interest.

From this need arose ancient man's curiosity about the material world and led him to postulate something other than nature as the cause of being. The passion to come up with and understand this power was the mainspring of religious endeavor. Influenced alike by fear and desire, the ancient man finally associated this mysterious power with a human likeness and so brought God into intimate relations with life. And in so far as he believed he had attained to a right relation with this power, man became at home in the world. In proportion as he acknowledged and responded to this imperious necessity, he became a God-centered man. All his important interests—his intellectual, social, and moral conceptions—were tightly bound together by this essential fact. The religious impulse developed culture, sanctioned political relations, and found its ultimate expression in civilization. Religion is "the residual inspiration of human life; . . . the work of religion is perpetual parentage."[3]

[3]Hocking: "The Meaning of God in Human Experience," pp. 20-23.

This does not mean that the God-centered man was always a good man, neither does it imply that his religion was free from superstition or immoral perversions; but it does evidence the simple fact that man attached importance to religion because he believed that life's supreme values centered in the idea of God and in right relation to him.

The primary reason, to put it bluntly, why religious interest has declined in the modern world is that our conception of the source and nature of important values has changed. While the sense of dependence has remained constant, the modern man has come to believe that his important interests are to be found in human rather than in divine relations. The universe has ceased to manifest a divine power and appears to the imagination as a man-centered universe. Intimate participation in the moving procession of civilizations, especially when economic interests have developed twentieth-century industrialism, has persuaded man to believe that his most important concerns belong to a human rather than a divine realm.

If religion be an acknowledgment of what

constitutes the highest aims of life, then it is not too much to say that the modern man has made a religion out of his earthly relations and the need for God has gradually lost authority over his mind. The modern man rejects God, not because it is an unreasonable belief, but because he does not acutely feel a need for God under present conditions. There may be a God, there may be, too, a future life, but the pressure of immediate demands is so great that he simply allows religion to fade out of his view among his important concerns.

The idea of destiny has ceased to have meaning to us; we think of everything in terms of interest, of organized activities around us. In such an atmosphere man has lost his God, his sense of the spiritual, and the beauty of the world. His most perplexing experience is that somehow with all this modernity he has not found contentment. Restlessness makes him eager to adopt some new scheme of social control, some novel method of regulation of masses and men; when secularism embodies his beliefs in some form of social philosophy and explains

the reasonableness of his conception of values; when furthermore it professes to satisfy all needs in terms other than religious, it is easy to understand the formidable task at present confronting the Christian Church. For such a philosophy finds man so debilitated in spirit, so enslaved by economic necessity, so stupefied with half-truths, that religion, which demands quiet, reflective thought, dreaming and brooding upon the intangibles of life, fails to impress itself upon such a preoccupied mind.

If the modern man, taken in the large, has any religion at all, it is summed up in the belief that this world is self-sufficing and entirely capable of affording him durable satisfactions, without the aid of any religious belief—providing always that he can get enough of it. The need for deliverance from the tyranny of the world, which so heavily pressed for satisfaction upon the ancient man, has become for man a question of how far can one become successful: centering not in the status of the soul, but upon economic stability of material possessions.

The contrast between a God-centered and

man-centered universe is not an artificial one. It is suggested by some of the most significant facts of human nature, for history shows it to be a very old one. The Old Testament stories of the patriarchs indicate it in the contrast between the man of the tent and the man of the town. The pilgrim soul, set dreaming by the eternal urge within the heart, looked upon the tent as a symbol of the earth-separated life, the evidence of a faith in a goal beyond the world. The town builders, founding their dwellings upon the solid earth, announced their confidence in the durability and importance of this world. The impulse to make such comparisons is probably responsibile for the persistence of the belief that a country life is more favorable to religion than a city life. No doubt the countryman has been more conservative in respect to his beliefs than the town dweller; still the Bible shows that while religion began in a tent, it culminates in a city. The father of the faithful was content to be a stranger and pilgrim in the land promised, because he looked for a city which had foundations, whose builder

and maker was God. Ancient man finally parted with his suspicions and made the gods the founders and patrons of towns.

In face of the fact that the modern man is for the most part a town man, that whatever religion we hold must be manifested in urbanized communities, it is idle to speculate what might have happened had the race been content to dwell in the country. A significant fact of the present is the practical disappearance of the country type of mind. The increasing mobility of life, the vast expansion of means of transit, and the concentration of human and economic values in towns, has spread the sophistication of the city throughout the countryside. Most people are compelled to think in the concepts of urban life, and within the heart of cities the relative importance of spiritual and economic values must be determined.

The contrast originates in a psychological fact: the first startling discovery a thinking man makes is a need for personal integration. He is surprised to learn that human nature is at war with itself. A disturbing sense of duality makes personal adjustment

a primary passion. It was the inspiration of early religious quests and encouraged the belief that right relation with the universe would determine individual harmony. It also encouraged belief in a chief good and sharpened the conflict within the mind. From this came distinctions between sacred and profane, spiritual and secular, flesh and spirit, this world and the next. For which of these ends should man live? The choice was usually made in harmony with the view prevailing in the social group to which he belonged. But not wholly so, because he had to reckon with two primary urges of nature. One is the passion for rest, the other the impulse to travel. The rest impulse suggested settling down in this world and the identification of happiness with the enjoyment of some immediate good. It developed the nest-building habit and early sanctified ownership of property. It suggested that material relations determined ultimate values. If man was successful, he felt himself at home in the world. But the impulse to travel, to believe in a distant goal beyond the edge of immediate satisfaction,

often disturbed his contentment. The desire, awakened by a sudden intrusion of the tragic sense of life, impelled him to go out as Abraham did, not knowing where he was going. Thus man is compelled, often against his wishes, to attach more importance to dreams than to possessions. When contingency stirs up the nest and sets man upon spiritual quests, his need for religion arises, and the passion for adjustment becomes paramount.

But precisely as a need for individual guidance arises, man becomes very susceptible to the ruling passions of the social group to which he belongs. In eras of contentment with this world, the earth-centered conception justifies itself, and man, in spite of his disturbing dreams, becomes at home in the world. But when disturbance arises, when social and political conditions become unstable, the individual becomes acutely aware of other needs and often proclaims his discontent with this world by setting out on his travels, inspired by the belief in a center of life beyond the present, a satisfaction in some remote but spiritual good.

It is the alternate influence of these impulses on man's thoughts, which history reveals, that makes the contrast between a God-centered and a man-centered universe so suggestive. The idea that the evolutionary process gives us the key to history has been very influential in our time. The potency of this conception arises from the fact that it seems to guarantee stability and so prevent a too sudden intrusion of contingency into one's scheme of life. We have fondly imagined that the process was like a river which for centuries had obediently kept to its predestined course. So certain was man's confidence in its consistency he could forecast his relation to it in the future without misgiving.

Such a naïve faith in the established order is responsible for the confidence we had in the idea of progress before the Great War, a notion that is not so influential now. The evolutionary process is not committed to continuity alone, neither can it be said to favor the popular creed: "Every day, and in every way, things are getting better and better." It is true that evolution is a child

of causation, but it is also a suggester of destiny; and in this way. Kirsopp Lake[4] has observed that the process of continuity is broken at certain points by catastrophic elements. In other words, historic development is influenced not only by continuity, but also by contingency, and periods of disturbance usually determine the idea systems which give character to an epoch. When continuity prevails for a long period society attains a measured equilibrium between economic necessity and the desire for a leisured life, and cultures arise and mature. But these placid areas are broken in upon by catastrophic elements; man is compelled to start again on his travels. He reexamines his guiding principles and develops moods which far more effectively mold the idea systems which govern social movements than the more placid moods of a prolonged period of tranquillity. Continuity slowly accumulates the dough, but contingency supplies the yeast which sets up new ferments.

One of these contingencies is efflorescence,

[4] "The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul," p. 439, passim.

wherein a people will, within a single generation, advance in certain directions further than the people of past times. The other aspect is disintegration, wherein the life force will pass away, and the ferment aroused by efflorescence settles down into a lifeless precipitate. It is not germane to our subject to outline specific examples of this dual process of disturbance, but to consider the moods that usually characterize such periods. The contrast, to use a vivid phrase of William James, lies between "once-born" and "twice-born" minds. Efflorescence develops the once-born mood, disintegration the twice-born mood, and these have radical effects on man's religious outlook.

An efflorescent age is characterized throughout by an immense delight in this world, and society becomes earthly, secular, and tough-minded. The mood justifies man's confidence in the earth and makes him at home in the world. An age of disintegration is characterized by a definite loss of confidence in this world, by dissatisfactions with material possessions, and quick-

ens a necessity for travel which seriously disturbs human contentment. Both moods affect the religious outlook. Efflorescence lends itself to a man-centered conception, while disintegration tends toward a God-centered ideal of religious life. One satisfies the desire for rest, the other kindles the passion for movement.

No view of progress can be adequate to all the facts that ignore these recurrent moods. They are suggested by the laws of historical development. If continuity be the characteristic of long periods of history, efflorescence and disintegration are the awakening and disturbing elements that explain the changes in human outlook and create the ferments that begin new movements. Without them the race would settle down in a nest and so stagnate. The dough of life requires periodic quickenings from the yeast; and these yeasty periods create the moods which dominate man's thoughts on important subjects. There are times when he feels very much at home in the world; there are others when the lure and dread of change which hide behind the screen of

stability disturb his contentment and set him on his travels. A twice-born mind welcomes these awakening experiences more readily than a once-born mind. The latter ignores the possibility of change by becoming thoroughly identified with the stir of life around it. To such a mind it seems impossible to go astray when so much is going on.

A characteristic of our time is the very slight influence of the idea of immortality. The sense of eternity, which has thus far kept the race on the march, is very dimly apprehended among the masses that make up our cities. So long as progress wears the benign aspect of continuity, it seems an impertinence to suggest that there may be other factors in the evolutionary process that we have to consider. And when science tells us that the universe has yet many millions of years before it, and that man is still in his infancy upon the earth, an almost infinite prospect of development opens before us. We are proud indeed to live on such an earth and to belong to such an important race, but a disturbing thought will sometimes intrude; we shall not be here to

see it nor share in the later glories. Time has arranged another experience for us. Continuity that presides over our dreams of progress finally hands us over to contingency and at one fell moment dissociates us forever from the moving scene. What then? What becomes of the values we have believed in? What are the abiding fruits of life? Do we survive? Are we able to gain from the ceaseless flux of material happenings some abiding personal significance?

Questions like these are present to the modern mind; the thought of death to many but renews their fear. Still most of us are indisposed to seek answers to such questions in religious faith, because the idea system that has determined our notion of values is the product of an efflorescent aspect of civilization that is rapidly changing into the disturbing aspect of disintegration. When we reflect upon contingencies we feel the fear of the twice-born mind, but when we search for some faith to sustain us in face of them we are still trying to take the attitude of a once-born mind. It is in this paradox we find the agony and the folly of the

modern world in the higher reaches of its thought. We are tender in the face of change and decay, but we are tough in the face of faith. Moral uneasiness and religious indifference walk hand in hand. Yet a discerning mind will ask, Can two walk together except they be agreed? How did we get this way? Religious interest has declined. Can the modern man justify indifference in the face of his misgivings? The answer must be sought in a consideration of the broader aspects of our immediate past. The twentieth century is undoubtedly the culmination of an efflorescent period, but it is also the beginning of an era of disenchantment. The idea system responsible for the modern attitude toward religion began with the renaissance of the fifteenth century.

In the Middle Ages society reached that equilibrium between economic necessity and leisure which permitted a system of culture to mature. That culture culminated in religion. The theology of the period found its final expression in Aquinas, and its poetic interpretation in Dante. That the universe

was God-centered was an accepted fact. Man was the crown of nature and God's son, while religion was the mother of the arts, the parent source of all cultural life. But the Middle Ages were breaking up. When efflorescence reaches equilibrium, disintegration begins: that is why the glory of the Middle Ages is like the splendor of the setting sun.

The cultural values of the renaissance were beyond question immense. It was a distinct advance in the progress of mankind. The intellectual and political expansions of the modern world, which brought untold liberations and material benefits to the masses, are a direct fruitage of that mighty upheaval. No one can regret that the idea system, which issued from the period, altered the social and theological outlook which had dominated the Middle Ages. For without this the spiritual influences which developed the modern world would have wanted elasticity and adaptability to the new needs.

What makes the influence of the renaissance so vital to the religious philosopher,

however, is that the alteration in religious outlook did not limit itself to the superstructure, but changed the foundations of man's confidence, and so through stages at first gradual, and then rapid, managed to transform the God-centered idea system of the Middle Ages into the modern conception of a man-centered universe, with consequences of grave import to all the elements which enter into human happiness. The long drift, passing at first through humanism and then through the scientific revolution, has at last in the twentieth century culminated in the industrial régime in which man has gradually lost his cultural and personal significance in a conception that comes dangerously close to a machine-centered universe. The displacement of man by the machine heralds beyond doubt the end of the efflorescent period and the beginning of the era of disintegration.

Man seems incapable of putting old wine into new bottles. In fact, the post-renaissance mind was so busy with new bottles that it was careless of the wine poured into them, and many of the essential gains were

lost; yet at first the change was so gradual that it hardly attracted attention. The classical culture of the past impregnated the new world feeling with a glorious idealism quite friendly to the religious spirit. But eventually, when scientific methods came into being and man began to study, explore, and control the material world around him, especially when increasing power over nature augmented his riches, a slow but relentless drift away from the heritage of the Middle Ages began, which in the twentieth century has culminated in a widespread indifference to man's spiritual relations.

It is quite true that the religious spirit has persisted alongside of the earthly development, but there has been a disposition to regard man's spiritual needs as less important than his economic needs. As the earthly multiplication of organized interests grew around man's mind in urbanized communities, the need for religion was less obvious. Its symbols, in architecture, ritual, and creedal forms, persisted, but the animating spirit was enfeebled. With this lessening interest in religion man lost the sense of

belonging to an unseen universe; the spiritual life lost its motive power, while increasing absorption in and satisfaction with this world seem to afford an adequate substitute for spiritual dependence.

In the twentieth century, surrounded by whirring machines, congested in big towns, seeing on all sides the material symbols of his mastery of nature, the modern man has lost the vital sense of being a stranger and pilgrim on the earth and has become, in most important aspects of his thought and purpose, an earth-centered creature. That in essence is what we mean by "modern." The universe seems to be under new management—a vast improvement over the old view, on which account multitudes are quite content to allow religious need to fade from the mind and to imagine that life's durable values lie entirely within the limits of the material universe.

This does not mean, however, that the modern man has parted with his sense of eternity. On the contrary, this is just the aspect of things which causes most concern. For God has placed eternity in man's heart,

and he cannot be wholly content with this world. But when men realize that they are in debatable ground, that they are voting too heavily on the side of material interests and overlooking other less tangible values, they usually resort to some rational explanation and invent theories to justify their position.

The modern spirit justifies itself in secularism. This is the most formidable rival of religion at the present time. Secularism usually manifests itself as a class-conscious social philosophy under various names. Such organized movements, while opposing religion in the established sense, are in a sense religious, because they are often inspired with moral idealism and profess to satisfy man's total necessities within the bounds of this world. The weakness of these positions is found in their partial aspect. Limited to certain classes, they have a disruptive effect and as such lose much of their appeal. Still society will have to reckon with them in the future. If men believe that the chief good is found in the possession of this world only, it is natural that

they should gather into class-conscious groups in the effort to control as much of it as possible.

If secularism always made its appeal in such conceptions, no doubt we should draw back from it. The modern man is a great lover of the *status quo* where property rights are concerned. He is extremely sensitive in the pocket nerve, and when invited to accept a new social arrangement that more adequately expresses the modern confidence in economic goods he rebels against it. The real danger does not come from this quarter, but rather from a secular view that looks upon man's spiritual relations with indifference; a spirit that acts upon the supposition that the modern man has found in economic rationalism something that can take the place of religion.

There is, as already pointed out, an irrepressible conflict in man's soul between a traveling instinct and the desire for rest. One reminds him that here he has no continuing city, that he is or ought to be a stranger and pilgrim in the earth. The other tempts him to settle down upon the

material estate, upon something near, tangible, in a sense real. He never finds it easy to be loyal to either impulse. What usually happens is that a man will profess to be going on pilgrimage, but his setting out is postponed because he has not yet learned how to simplify his baggage. Meanwhile, he gets rid of the discomfort of inconsistency by becoming absorbed in affairs around him; and while languidly keeping up the traditional forms of religion, becomes indifferent to its spirit. Such a man can so effectually reduce his life to routine as to become insensible to the higher claims of the soul.

Secularism explains for the most part the decline of religious interest in the modern world. The climax was reached at the close of the nineteenth century, and the consequences are well expressed in a phrase of Oswald Spengler[5] when he affirms that the spiritual distresses of the time have fallen upon us, "because we have descended from the perspective of the bird to that of the frog." Ours is an age of departmental

[5] "The Decline of the West," Vol. 1, p. 43.

knowledge. The expert has taken the place of the philosopher, and through absorption in the particulars we have lost the vision of the ends of life.

The culmination is the familiar one of the rise of the big-city mind: earthly, unbelieving, irreligious. The ripe fruitage of the secular trend which began in the fifteenth century is now evident in the modern spirit. And man, wonderful as he is, in the midst of his machines and inventions, is an enigma to a philosopher because he seems to have no sense of direction. He is moving rapidly, but he does not seem to be going anywhere. Preoccupied with parts, he has no knowledge of wholes; and in the vast increase of material resources for living well, he is failing to find the goal of his heart's desire. Of none can it be more truly said: the god of this world hath blinded his eyes that he should not discern the truth.

CHAPTER II

THE COLLAPSE OF THE SECULAR PROGRAM

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THE formidable influence of secularism lies in the importance given to the earthly man. The industrial expansion of the modern world has developed such a variety of competitive interests as to reduce man's religious needs to a minimum, or at least to present a rivalry of appeal almost irresistible. It adapted man's spiritual heritage to its own purposes and remade human nature in its own image. Its greatest influence, perhaps, lies in its disarming indifference to religion. For secularism can sometimes be very accommodating. While professing to be in sympathy with certain views, it quietly adapts them to its immediate ends so as completely to change their character. Inasmuch as the body of its achievements is so evident, its material benefits so useful, the effect on man's spirit may for a season be forgotten.

The fundamental influence of the change

of emphasis from a God-centered to a man-centered universe may be expressed as an enormous increase in man's earthly importance. The mechanical equipment of science laid the kingdoms of the world at man's feet, with the result that it has been easy to shift the emphasis from God to man. Man's creations became symbols of his power over nature. Organized about the idea system of the big-city mind—the complex of material force, the increase in wealth, the growing control of nature's mysterious energies—it were easy to believe that the universe is now under new management. It becomes in a sense "modern" and breaks with the past as something new, different, and self-sufficing.

The consequences of this change of emphasis are of far-reaching importance. In the first place, it has made self-assertiveness rather than humility the characteristic mood of the modern mind. It is justified in this fashion. LaPlace, when asked what he did with the idea of God in his scheme of celestial mechanics, replied: "I had no need of that hypothesis." As a man of sci-

ence, working within a limited domain, he was well within his rights. But the modern man, professing to deal with the whole scheme of values, cannot, save at his peril, leave out the supreme question. Yet he often does in this way. If he is capable of working out his material destiny in so magnificent a fashion, if he can invent powerful machines and harness nature's energies to his will, if he can fling the symbols of his power into the upper air in the form of great buildings, why should it be thought incredible that he should fashion his spiritual destiny also, without the help of God? If he has developed so complex a type of material civilization, may he not at least claim the privilege of dictating the terms on which he is to live with the Creator of the universe? This self-assertive mood is at the basis of all grades of thought; it is particularly evident in the big-city mind which measures its importance chiefly in terms of bulk and quantity. So long as this mood is dominant, it is practically impossible to take a religion that is rooted in dependence seriously. The very idea of redemption is foreign to such a temperament.

In the second place, the multiplication of important vocations has developed a non-religious motive for living. This seems to provide, in a secular pursuit, the same intellectual and emotional satisfactions formerly supposed to come from religion alone. The service of humanity takes the place of the worship of God. Good fellowship is substituted for spiritual singularity. Thus many highly gifted men are able to render useful forms of service to society without associating themselves with a specific form of religious belief. They are inspired by the ideal of man rather than the vision of God. Whether this kind of motive can survive must be considered in a later chapter; I refer to it here because it is one of the most plausible reasons for confidence in the secular view of things.

In the third place, the change of emphasis has potently affected the popular conception of religion. Secularism does not directly reject religion; the sense of dependence is still vital, but it turns more readily toward the world than toward God. This altered feeling leads to adaptations

and accommodations to secular trends. This has naturally affected the organized Church. While devoting much care to adjusting its vocation to the secular program, the Church has grown fearful of centering its emphasis on the tremendous idea of redemption. It seems almost impertinent to suggest that so splendid a world needs to be redeemed; for has it not written its claim to perpetuity on the very face of the sky? The modern man has no keen sense of need for God. That is why we hear so much of service and so little of worship; why we exalt the Golden Rule and are shy of the Cross; why our Churches are collections of human activities rather than congregations of the righteous and sanctuaries of God. And as the kingdom of God in the popular estimation has become secularized and permitted misguided leaders often to identify it with a very earthly type of civilization, the sense of life as a pilgrimage fades from the mind. Man gets accustomed to thinking of values as circumscribed by visible and measurable horizons and finally loses himself in a maze of mechanical relations, in-

stead of being lured by an irrepressible spiritual urgency to seek the goal of life in the light that shines for minds of faith and vision.

Such were for the most part the guiding principles that man accepted in respect to his spiritual needs at the close of the nineteenth century. But that century also ended one of the most splendid of efflorescent eras that the world had seen: a development in material wealth and scientific achievement more significant of progress than any previous period. But we must not forget that the splendor of an efflorescent period heralds its close and intimates that disintegration is not far behind.

An awakening to this sinister phase of history might have come more deliberately had it not been for the Great War. But that titanic struggle brought to swift maturity the fruitage of man's modes of thinking for the past three hundred years. The war was not a sudden intrusion of diabolic force upon our peaceful earth; nor did it fall from the blue as a visitation of Providence, but it arose as an inevitable culmina-

tion of the civilization that had developed from the fifteenth century. It was precisely the sort of catastrophe one could predict as the outcome of the economic and social forces rampant in our world.

The first effect of this mighty upheaval on reflective thought appeared in an altered conception of progress that was featured in books of the post-war period.[1] The modern world came to its early prime with a sublime faith in the cosmic process. The law of causation was committed to an upward development. The very word "evolution" carried assurance with it that things were getting better and better. Even philosophers were subject to the same spirit and disposed to overlook catastrophic elements in past eras. The outward splendor of the age gave plausible support to the optimistic view. Huxley[2] fearlessly exposed the fallacy of progress in his Romanes lecture, but nobody listened to him then.

The war has changed all this. Nothing at present is more significant of a loss of

[1] J. B. Bury: "The Idea of Progress," 1920.

[2] "Evolution and Ethics," 1893.

prestige, as well as a want of insight, than the pessimism of the highly educated classes in respect to human progress. A broader view of the trends of civilization would compel us to admit that a great war was a logical outcome of the prevailing economic and social movements. But most of our prophets were as completely captured by the narrow outlook as the ordinary man; and so it took a war to remind us that deep within the heart of development lie the catastrophic elements of efflorescence and disintegration, and we cannot have one without the other.

Our social philosophers are for the most part still occupied with a study of the external conditions of a post-war world. But has not a time come when we should do some radical thinking—a thinking that goes down to the roots? Such reflection should not be content with statistical studies or conditions, but seek for primary causes of modern unrest. For if we know what the causes are we can control the effects.

A French philosopher has observed that when we wish to understand the spirit of a

people we must not look for it in their outward behavior, but seek it in their prayers and regrets. This is not a very accessible region; yet could we stand without the prayer closet of the modern world we should probably discover the causes of its uncertainty, for one fact impresses me about our time as something more than a symptom. It is that with all our power over the material estate we are the most discontented of creatures. These discontents are compelling us to look again and again at the secular program, with the result that confidence is slowly yielding to deep misgivings. We are beginning to rebel against a one-sided view of human nature and to suspect that there is something radically wrong with our world.

Moods of reflection are painful experiences. When man is stopped in mid-career by a necessity for thought, when he can no longer ignore the insistent voices within, he is on his way to new experiences. Increasing discomfort which accompanies thought will force him to look back upon the pathway along which he has traveled, to ask if

he has not lost something or left something behind that he needs.

The modern man is often like a traveler at the frontier of a foreign country who discovers he has left his passport behind. Not once or twice in our human story has thinking upon one's ways turned man's feet back unto the testimonies of God. From this fact, I believe I can note in the prevalent religious curiosity and longing for spiritual adventures a significant trend of the times. But the way to understand this is to look for certain indications of misgiving about the adequacy of the secular program. If confidence in secularity was a dominant belief at the close of the nineteenth century, want of faith in its adequacy seems to me to be the most characteristic aspect of the deeper trends of the immediate present. And in so far as this is true it has a most important meaning for the spiritual mind. Our misgivings can be traced to an impression. Let me put it in a contrast. The man of the Middle Ages was God-centered; the man of the nineteenth century was man-centered; but the man of

the immediate present is beginning to suspect that he is machine-centered, and he will not have it so.

The awakening of the fifteenth century undoubtedly rescued the human spirit from a too drastic preoccupation with the other world; it revealed the importance and opportunity of the material estate and aroused ambitions to go forth and subdue the world and make it the servant of aspiration and desire. This was as it should be, and the modern era is the result of that faith. Beyond all criticism the movement was a distinct advance over past ages.

The evils which have resulted, and which have now reached maturity, are not legitimate fruits of the movement, neither do they reside in the substantial secular values to which the movement led, but are to be sought for in what man left behind while responding so splendidly to the expanding enthusiasms of the period. There is no reason why man should not have brought to the mastery of the world the regulative concept of a God-centered ideal. Yet the paradox that will puzzle the future histo-

rian of the epoch will be the presence of so much discontent in the midst of so much material wealth and civilized activity.

The increasing energy potentials with which science has endowed the modern man have transferred the burden of production from his shoulders to the machine. And that was a great advance; for without it, it would be impossible to sustain the vast urbanized populations of our time, and the widespread self-development made possible by the growth of free institutions would have failed of fruitage. Increase in labor-saving devices and a more thorough organization of business methods have freed the human spirit for the pursuit of the higher life. Material growth should lead to a balance between economic necessity and the requirements of a leisured existence, and so produce a culture superior to that of the Middle Ages. And in this culture religion the mother of Arts should have taken the lead in dominating man's imagination in face of the higher mysteries of the universe.

But none of these results, in a form that a discerning thinker would expect, have is-

sued from our secular growth. The modern man, amid the splendors of a material world, is a strangely disenchanted being. His rapid conquest of nature has as yet brought no millennium; in fact, each advance in control has but augmented his discontents, until here in America we have developed the most prosperous and restless people in the world.

Secular progress was the inspiration of the closing decades of the nineteenth century; to-day it is the solvent of our hopes, and as the modern man obtains leisure to think, and brood, and dream, instead of drawing nigh unto the higher capacities of human nature in an expectant and appreciative mood, he more than ever doubts that they exist, or at any rate approaches them in a spirit of criticism and often of ill-temper. The reason is that reflective thought increases the pains of a mind already sore and irritable. Leisure, the inspiration of his busy hours, brings no solace to his tortured spirit; rather increases the fear of life as he contemplates the insecurities without and the want of resource

within, and "so the twilight that he desired is turned into trembling unto him." For soon or late man must ask, whether he is master of the world, or the world master of him, whether in the passion to control the material estate he be not subjecting himself overmuch to a sort of mechanized existence which leaves little time and less desire for any higher type of experience?

To such a mind religion will mean nothing, because religion is concerned with destiny, with terminal facilities, while the modern spirit is engrossed with interests; and preoccupation with immediate parts makes one careless of the whole of things. We spend our time disputing about the "broken arcs" and are indifferent to the "perfect round." Thus is man gradually imprisoned in a network of economic relations, to the exclusion of the higher needs of the spirit. Emerson puts it thus:

> "There are two laws discrete
> Not reconciled—
> Law for man, and law for thing;
> The last builds town and fleet,
> But it runs wild,
> And doth the man unking."

This is the root of the matter. Economic development without control of a philosophy of values is steadily taking from us the power to discern the true ends of existence. It confronts us with a world where "nothing exists to be enjoyed, but everything exists to be mastered."[3] The law for thing is stronger than the law for man. It is making man in the image of a thing and reducing him to the level of a machine. Thus it comes easy to accept material success as the sole criterion of worth, and as man becomes aware of this sinister influence he is more and more discontented.

Our country for the most part is divided between the successful and the unsuccessful. The successful oppose change of any kind because they are afraid of being deprived of their possessions. They are very conservative when some novel phase of social philosophy threatens with ruthless hand to touch the pocket nerve. And the secular spirit at the roots of their business policy fills them with dread when it confronts them in the form of a political pro-

[3]Adams: "Idealism and the Modern Age," p. 33.

gram calling for readjustment of the material estate. The unsuccessful envy the successful and are anxious to change everything. Much of the active thought of our time, when freed from the tyranny of business, wastes itself in shallow discussions instead of attacking the problem at its roots. Soreness of mind is a symptom of a deep disease and falls an easy prey to the influence of agitators and demagogues. This restless and irresponsible attitude toward guiding principles constitutes a grave danger to our stability.

But I see here something more fundamental. There is a feeling abroad that there is something seriously wrong about the foundations of our institutions. This feeling is atmospheric rather than specific; but I will venture to trace it through certain stages to a very definite kind of fear.

A discerning writer has observed that the economic trends of the time lead directly to a new kind of asceticism—an asceticism within this world. The increasing demands of highly organized business, the unlimited conception of competition, the

struggle to control the material estate, make it almost inevitable that every human interest should be devoted to success in this world. The modern man is so thoroughly convinced that success in business is the chief goal that he will sacrifice his personal capacities, his social graces, his domestic happiness, to say nothing of his spiritual relations, to the idol of prosperity.

This is directly traceable to the false basis of modern business, which is founded on the wants of the producer rather than upon the legitimate needs of the consumer. The magic word of the time is "production." Every thought and energy is devoted to the attainment of this end. Thus it comes about that the expert advertiser and the high-powered salesman are let loose on the community charged with the sole purpose of making as many people as possible want as many things as possible, without proper relation to their genuine necessities.

A further phase of it comes in with the specious system of installment buying, justified by economic experts as an ideal

business device as well as a social benefaction of enlightened personal service. The result is that most people are under constant economic pressure, trying to pay for something that they do not need. The mind becomes a battle ground of wants, out of relation to real needs, with the result that many people are living beyond their incomes and have little time and less desire for the pursuit of cultural ends. Such intense preoccupation with business, working from both ends of the economic scale, develops an ascetic attitude toward life in which every object is subordinated to one interest.

One of the wisest of Moses' economic provisions[4] was the law of the corner, which forbade the gleaning of every grape from the vines or gathering every blade of wheat from the fence corners. Something must be left for the poor and the stranger. It was a good law because it put a limit on production and insisted that man should have other interests than those centered in

[4]Leviticus 19: 9, 10.

business. But this law has been abrogated in our time to the hurt of every one.

Perhaps the most pathetic spectacle in America just now is the unavailing search of highly successful men for the lost riches of their minds. Year by year they go back into their fields looking vainly in the fence corners for one blade of wheat, searching among the bare vines for a single grape. But they never find them. What they discover is that the long-neglected capacities of their souls have perished for lack of nourishment. In their zeal for unlimited production they have lost their lives. Surely there is nothing quite so bitter as the realization that one has lost the capacity for friendship, the companionship of women and children, the love of culture and refinement. This is a certain evidence that many have missed the true ends of living, and that they cannot make good use of their leisure. Epicurus remarked "that the business of most men in my day was a madness and their rest a lethargy," a classical definition of a tired business man.

Successful producers buy pictures, but

they cannot enjoy them; they fill fine houses with books, but they do not read them; they travel about the world, visit old cities, haunt historic places, brood in the dim light of ancient cathedrals, but without cultural inspiration. What after all shall it profit a man, if in the pursuit of success he lose the finest of human susceptibilities?[5]

Moreover, we cannot ignore the fact that many successful men, some of whom wield enormous power over the life and destiny of the people, are vulgar in their personal habits, unrefined in their pleasures, and infantile in their opinions on the broader aspects of society and the state. As Samuel Johnson observed of certain in his time, "they have lost the civility of tradesmen without acquiring the manners of gentlemen." This type of citizen breaks down the safeguards set around the democratic belief that all men are born free and equal, and in this way. The principle was

[5]These tendencies are reflected in recent fiction, such as "Dodsworth," by Sinclair Lewis, and Booth Tarkington's "The Plutocrat."

meant to affirm the equality of all with respect to the opportunity of making the best of themselves under all the conditions that prevail. But it is easy to shift the emphasis from an equality of opportunity to an equality of instincts. This perversion is responsible for some of the gravest misgivings concerning the stability of our political institutions at the present time.

The masses, in so far as they are influenced by the belief at all, are at once deprived of the incentive for self-improvement. Instead of deriving from our free institutions a stimulus toward the very best type of citizenship, many use them to justify a shiftless and unstable life. This always attracts the attention of active minorities that rove about a democratic state, and from these from time to time issue abortive efforts to improve the character of the citizen through the influence of moral legislation. But why should the average man concern himself with culture and a higher type of citizenship, when he sees directors of large economic enterprises—the successful governing classes—equally

indifferent to the same high ideals? If one set of instincts is as good as another, why should not one choose what he likes? Yet it remains true the world over that a people indifferent to their cultural growth, who justify the whims and fancies of an unrestrained individualism, on the ground that they belong by rights to the successful classes, cannot be safely intrusted with the guidance of human societies, nor direct the citizen into the path of an ordered life.

The middle class in America at present is most exposed to economic pressure. Caught between the upper and nether millstones of big business and organized labor, the white collar type of worker is often in a pitiable state. Highly specialized methods of business and manufacture create peculiar problems for this class. They are frequently required to discharge their total personal capacity through a very narrow vent, since their earning power depends upon adaptability to specialized kinds of labor. They are not required to be creative or inventive, but to give stolid and uncomplaining obedience to mechanical organizations. One

result is that vast territories in their natures are unused and unwanted; and these soon become fruitful seed plots for all kinds of discontents. The dull ache of unsatisfied desire, the monotony of work which takes the sparkle out of life, drives many to seek satisfaction in various kinds of exciting pleasures. Thus the mind is deprived of its power to enjoy quieter and more durable experiences.

When middle age comes—the time of maximum cost of living and education of children; the time too when a man begins to look forward to some of the finer enjoyments—along comes the tragedy of mergers, and under the abstract phrase "getting rid of the overhead"—a form of words very dear to shareholders—multitudes of worthy men and women are quietly cast out into the streets without much hope of adapting themselves to another type of work.

A type of business is developing at present which, while probably justified in the long run on the ground that it can reduce the cost to the ultimate consumer, is destruc-

tive of healthy competition and quietly and ruthlessly destroys the small business man of independent means. The small business so far has been a good school for thrift, industry, and character. In the past it contributed a great deal of stability to the community. It was a conservator of moral and cultural values not to be despised; and if we are to part with it we should get something more than a hypothetical expectation of reduced cost in exchange for the privileges bestowed upon it by society. Otherwise, we shall be selling our birthright for a mess of pottage.

It is too early to forecast what will be the precise influence of big business on society, but at present there is room for some misgiving. A sinister aspect of this new type of business is its impersonality. The small business man had something he called good will; under the new régime this will probably cease to mean anything, for how can there be a neighborly spirit where there are no neighbors? The captain of industry has displaced the old feudal baron, but with this difference. The baron at least

knew his dependents. They lived on his land, looked to him for advice and protection, and usually got it. Their relation to him was always personal, and no matter what happened, they remained to the end human beings. The captain of industry never comes in contact with the human factor at all, except when he is confronted by labor leaders, and this hardly makes for a brotherly relationship.

As the money power is concentrated in the hands of the few, we are developing a type of leader who rarely comes in contact with persons; who spends his time in shuffling money—printed symbols of reality; which, although they rest on human labor and energy, never obtrude upon the conscience a suggestion of the passionate struggle and tragic meanings which underlie the productivity of his corporation. This type of man is as much a slave as his employee, and in the long run more to be pitied. The rapid development of big business loses sight of the individual man. "Getting rid of the overhead" is an abstraction that may often be more deadly

than a poison gas; in fact, it is more sinister because the human element is never allowed to enter into its calculations.

Beyond doubt the future will show an alteration in this regard, for the middle class will have learned how to adjust itself to such drastic changes. The human race has an amazing elasticity, and I am not without hope that it will meet this test as it has others. But we must not forget that the present generation has to meet this problem in its formative stage. Many workers to-day have already used up their time and lost their power of adaptability; and the danger is a very real one, that in face of increasing economic pressure they will lose heart and flounder in a sea of rebellious and bitter thoughts, unstirred by any hope of betterment. It is upon the workers of the present that this strain is coming in magnified form.

It is a new type of economic slavery, and to a discerning mind the immediate future is by no means encouraging; for we are looking upon the relentless destruction of the middle classes, the gradual disappear-

ance of the type of man who in former ages has been the most stable element in the social order. In our Western world society is slowly turning turtle, and many know not how to keep afloat on this wild sea of economic change.

Yet from precisely such drastic experiences man has more than once been sent on new spiritual quests. As the Greek world, when confronted with social change by Alexander the Great, turned its thought inward and developed new philosophies to meet the new needs, so in my judgment will there arise a new spiritual susceptibility out of the present discontents. But before we can appreciate such a possibility we must look more intimately at the proximate effect; for no one can deny that the present outlook is responsible for many of the fearsome specters which flit like night birds around the fringes of our thought. They evidence a growing uneasiness about the secular program, a feeling that may at any time take the form of a reasoned philosophy that the dominant mood of the time rests on an insecure belief, and that a

secular program cannot meet the total necessities of human beings.

These aspects of economic life—the one leading to preoccupation with business, making success the chief good; the other making restriction of human necessities to a narrow phase of work, the chief conception of economic value—are culminating in two impressions that are beginning to express themselves in widely different spheres of thought. They suggest that the modern man is beginning to reconsider the secular program, and perhaps to set out on new spiritual adventures. These impressions, so far as I discern their trend, show that some kind of fear is Lord of the American mind, and when one looks at the more comprehensive aspects of Western thought, this fear seems to be taking on a sinister phase, as of a monstrous power of evil in the world which man cannot overcome.

This will become evident if we ask, What is the function of fear in human nature? Consider an analogy. The body is so arranged that each legitimate need is guarded by a sensation. When that need is met

the sensation in normal cases subsides. So is it with the mind. Every mental need is guarded by an appropriate sensibility, and fear is one of them. When fear is aroused in a normal way, it develops into wonder, reverence, and awe; and its highest manifestation is in worship, as when we say that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Such refined experiences free the mind of carking cares and set it upon alluring adventures. Spiritual fear is founded upon the apprehension of God as the end of life; it is the reasonable turning of the mind toward the Determiner of destiny. Sensibility of this type is the mother of creative effort; it leads directly to the belief that the universe is meant to be enjoyed, that it is a place where spirit with spirit can meet, where man comes to know and commune with the Eternal God.

But what has happened to this precious endowment in our time? If we judge by what many say, we should suppose that fear has been banished from the modern world. We are assured on the best authority that the fear of the Lord is outmoded

since the universe is under new management. But those who believe this are strangely lacking in discernment. It may be true that a deep reverential fear of God is not a common element in modern life, but we have got something in exchange for it that is most depressing. The fear of God is a stimulus, the modern type of fear is a tryanny and a paralysis. It is a fear that finds its natural symbol in a machine rather than a person. Aroused as it often is by dreads and hates and envies, instead of inspiring the human spirit with a passion for great adventures, it deprives it of initiative and hope. Fear of some sort is Lord of the American mind; and if we define it, I should say it is the fear of failure. The dread of being thought unsuccessful haunts the mind of man, from the big executive to the office boy.

To such a mind society seems to obey the law of the pack rather than that of the hive. So long as you are pushing onward you are safe, but if you falter you are lost. If it gets about that you are not successful, it is easy to be crowded to the wall, or disappear

in the moving procession, never to be heard of again. It is fear that is the primary cause of the spread of psychological sickness in our Western world, especially in America. It attacks all classes alike, and is just now rather on the increase among the young, caused no doubt by the increasing difficulty of getting a start in business, or in setting up a domestic establishment. It is often developed by the swift destruction of youthful idealism when it has to meet too early the impact of a heartless and impersonal world. The widespread influence of fear of this type is a clear indication that our race has left the path of safety and is wandering aimlessly in a dark wood, where the right way is lost.

A significant aspect of modern life is seen in the trends of thought expressed in literature. At a time when science is becoming more spiritual, popular literature is growing more pagan. Our creative writers for the most part invite us to go direct to nature without God; and often, too, without moral restraint. Science in the renaissance gave man dominion over

the world, but now in the hands of irresponsible adventurers turns round upon him and reminds him that he is no more enduring than the rest of the passing show. With a debased conception of human values, it has been easy to descend into an inferno of unrestrained animalism, which accepts thrills and excitements as final registers of human existence.

But it is dangerous business to trifle with or pervert the endowment of sensibility, for fear of any sort is aroused by contingency. That which elevates and enfranchises the human spirit is fear that faces contingency with hope; but that which enslaves is the fear of contingency without hope, and that is the quality that interests me in our present discontents. In the hands of our fiction writers sensibility has been so abused that men have passed beyond the stage of being thrilled and are entering, especially in their deeper moods, into something most depressing. The descent into the inferno of unrestrained animalism has found a devil there. For using good and bad psychology many

have ventured into the dubious region of the subconscious and explored the subnormal aspects of mind, until they have opened a mysterious realm, from which has issued unbidden a new sense of evil. Entirely preoccupied with parts, and indifferent to wholes, these writers present us with a world of shreds and patches in which the only thing that matters is the immediate present. They are devoted with undoubted talent to continuous analysis of near-by impressions, but draw back from making a synthesis of anything. Such writers are bringing back to our time a sense of the monstrous power of evil, in face of which man is helpless.

Such is the conclusion of a writer of note:

> "In the last few years the devil has come quite definitely into his own again. In the art and literature of to-day evil is not a tolerated blemish. There is no attempt to bring it into conformity with good. It is evil militant, often triumphant. The devil is no longer upon a leash. He is veritably loose again, and his name is legion. He

has his dominion and his rights. To apologize or to account for him, as was the custom of a previous generation, is against the whole spirit of the movement we are describing. This modern art renders to evil the things that are evil. The devil has his empire and his devotees. Ugliness, a brooding Narcissus, dotes upon the margin of his horrid pool. It was the custom of the divine moralists to show evil momentarily victorious in order that God's victory might be more signally exhibited. . . . Now, however, it is the turn of the Prince of Darkness to be a sportsman of souls."[6]

Moral uneasiness which underlies skepticism about the stability of our institutions is significant of much, and chiefly of the fact that present trends indicate that the secular program has reached a point where it can no longer satisfy. It has ceased to free and begun to enslave the human spirit.

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[6]Palmer: "Studies in the Contemporary Theatre," 1927; pp. 68, 69. For examples of this tendency see: "Three Plays," by Luigi Pirandello, Dutton, New York, 1922; "Three Plays," by H. R. Lenormand, Victor Golancz, Ltd., London, 1928; and "Wolf Solent," by John Cowper Powys, Simon and Schuster Company, New York, 1929.

Present discontents, however much at first they may be associated with economic interests, arise from something spiritual; from a hurt, misunderstood, and neglected something in a man's soul. Out of these inchoate but representative phases of modern experience will issue new spiritual susceptibilities. Already there are evidences abroad that man is unwilling to accept economic status as a final register of what he has a right to expect, and that he is looking for enlargement of life in a spiritual direction. All of which means that the secular rival of religion, which seemed to justify its claim in the material expansion that culminated at the close of the nineteenth century, is now found inadequate, and man is beginning to search for some resource beyond nature. This in my judgment is the most hopeful aspect of present-day thought, for it points with unerring precision to an awakening interest in spiritual values and a final break with the blind guides of our immediate past.

CHAPTER III

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Readers may conclude that the account given in previous chapters is too somber; some may be inclined to dismiss the subject as pessimistic. Perhaps this is as good a place as any to define the word. A pessimist, as I understand it, is not one who frankly faces austere facts, but who in the presence of these facts confesses he has no remedy for them. Pessimism does not arise from scrutiny of phases, but from want of faith in the observer.

Misgivings may well overtake an artistic looker-on at life who views the world with impersonal detachment; or, like Jeremiah, wishes for a lodging place in a wilderness for wayfaring men. To one who desires human intercourse without responsibility, one's associates may well appear as a "bundle of rascals." The depressing features of much of the popular literature of the present indicate this. For ours is a

shrill age, in which many are shouting from the housetops how badly they feel about everything. It is amazing that they get anyone to listen to them, but they do.

The disciple of Christ cannot do this. He may view the world as lost and without hope, save in the sovereign mercy of God; but his courage in holding this against popular trends arises from faith in the gospel. Because he has this hope, he uses great plainness of speech. He will not shrink from diagnosis, although what he sees is so grave as to try the soul to its uttermost. The value of religious vision depends on the thoroughness with which it faces phases that oppose it. That is why faith is the only inspiration of hope. For Whitehead is surely right in saying:

> "The fact of the religious vision and its history of persistent expansion is our one ground for optimism. Apart from it, human life is a flash of occasional enjoyments lighting up a mass of pain and misery, a bagatelle of transient experience."[1]

[1] "Science and the Modern World," p. 275.

There is no hope for our world until it is forced to face its own discords. Until God's austere winds blow away the poisonous fogs with which our superficial culture has surrounded the mind, there is going to be no alteration in the outlook of our immediate present. If one who attaches supreme importance to the Christian religion is to comprehend the need of the world, he dare not draw back from facing facts, even when they appear contrary to the popular view of things. I venture then with the utmost humility to suggest, if we are to follow such studies to constructive conclusions, it were well to reflect upon the significance of a legend once seen outside a Russian theater: "People with weak wills are requested not to take tickets to this performance."

If modern literature has plunged into the depths of nature, without faith in God, until a new sense of evil has arisen to take away its hope, it were well for us to ask if there be any philosophy, or religion current in these times, except the Christian, strong enough to embolden the mind,

in face of fears and dreads, to look frankly at the diseases and confusions of the world? I do not at all believe I have given a too somber account of the sources of our discontents; but I discern on time's horizon, beyond the fever and fretfulness of the immediate present, a new spiritual sensibility, which beyond reasonable doubt indicates that the modern man is getting ready to reconsider religion as the only solution of his important problems.

As I see it, it is a refusal of the human spirit to submit further to the enslavement of the machine, or to seek complete satisfactions in a partial view of life. The same impulse which prompted man in the fifteenth century to cast off the bondage of scholasticism is responsible for the passionate hostility to the tyranny of economic rationalism. Beginning, as has been indicated, in the pride of a newly-discovered power over the world—a self-assertiveness which had no need of God—and slowly passing through a period of adjustment until grave misgivings prompted man to reexamine the foundations of life, it has

finally developed into a revolt against the tyranny of the machine and the sinister conclusions of a one-sided economic policy. Science found man in the Middle Ages, at the summit of nature, God's son, and by inventions and methods put him in possession of his rightful domain. It enlarged his outlook, increased his knowledge and control of material resources, and steadily augmented his authority over natural energies, until in the twentieth century it seemed to have given man complete possession of the world.

But somehow this has proved disappointing. Although science has explored the world, built the great cities, opened nature's treasury to human usages; although it has enabled man to harness mighty energies to his will, until material possessions have increased beyond the dreams of avarice, yet has this same power, misapplied in imperfect philosophies, stripped the soul naked before the austere implications of the unseen world. Intimations that man in the totality of his interests is no more important, or enduring, than the rest of

the passing show have been common in our time. Such suggestions, whether made with the brutal frankness of the materialist, or in the more subtle imaginative terms of the humanist, offer little solace, for they deprive the mind of the spirit of reverence, and man will not have it so.

There are evidences abroad in our Western world that man is getting ready for a spiritual pilgrimage. Again he is aware of religious need, and is setting about it in his own way, with the hope of finding answers to intensely human questions which he now believes require religion for their solution. Religion is again becoming an object of serious thought and popular interest; it is being sought for in behalf of man's æsthetic needs, or in search of moral stability. These evidences are not, however, to be measured by surface manifestations. Their meaning lies deeper, not so much in man's behavior as in his prayers and regrets. A philosopher looking for signs of the times would conclude not that ours is a religious age so much as an age becoming aware of its need of religion.

A significant evidence that the modern man is turning from a secular to a spiritual view of life is found in a loss of confidence in a non-religious motive for living. The idea-system of the Middle Ages bound all human interests into a very tight bundle of religious relations: that his narrowed life is beyond question true. That is why, when the tidal energy of the renaissance came in contact with the world in the form of applied science, it was easy to develop a vast number of vocations and callings, many of them in intimate contact with the requirements of the expanding life which were unfamiliar to the medieval mind. They were functioning outside the pale of religion as commonly understood.

This led to the growth of a culture quite different from that of the Middle Ages—a conception of service that appeared to offer complete satisfaction of man's intellectual and moral needs without religious belief. It cannot be denied that the complex development of objects and ends of worthwhile living in our modern civilization, in which man could find rich cultural and

moral satisfactions, has been a serious rival of religious interest. Devotion to such ends appeared to be as moral as those of religion, they were often more practical, and they undoubtedly gave man a sense of worth and significance in the community.

This conception is still widely influential. It explains why a large number of socially minded people have no apparent interest in religion and are never associated with any specific type of religious belief. For them I have the greatest respect, for they simply show that most of us can live for a long period without explanations as to why we are what we are.

Our time is characterized by splendid inconsistencies in this regard. Yet as life matures the mind must turn upon itself in search of reasons. We cannot forever lead an unexamined life, for time forces us to find guiding principles. It is just this inescapable necessity of trying to explain ourselves to ourselves, this new critical mood which evidences the fact that we are rapidly maturing and losing something of the unregulated idealism of youth, that has

disclosed to discerning minds the instability of a life conducted indefinitely without religious inspiration.

For the history of human thought teaches no lesson more clearly than this, that growth of knowledge without religious faith ends in pessimism, and often in despair. "Where there is no vision, the people perish"—they perish because they cast off restraint. This is one reason for the growing disrespect among the masses for the educated classes—a portentous sign of the times; for a class that professes to know and yet that neither finds nor vitally believes in a pathway of life that is suited to man's total needs is hardly worthy of confidence.

The ancients believed that religion is the mother of the arts. Spiritual impulse was the creative force of the old culture, and so it remained until the renaissance. Even then the splendor of the newly discovered classical culture illuminated and glorified man's first attempts at material expansion; but eventually, as man's control of nature became more confident and sure, the neces-

sity for a new type of culture became evident. This was highly important if man was to meet the needs of the new age, but the fatal mistake was made in what was quietly allowed to drop out of his view. Hence it is that we witness in the modern world the cultural children of the religious spirit leaving the old mother and going forth to set up house for themselves. We have art for art's sake, science for the sake of science, and knowledge for the sake of knowledge. Men act on the supposition that the part is greater than the whole and endeavor to find motives suggested by these partial interests, of sufficient stability to meet the experiences of the whole round of life. It is precisely at this point that confidence in a non-religious motive is breaking down.

The achievements of the modern movement are of the most substantial character. Science has brought untold benefits to humanity, for no other development could have produced the economic expansion of the present era. It is an aspect of efflorescence, as significant in its way as was the

cultural expansion of the Periclean age in Athens. In view of the fact that our era has advanced further than all preceding epochs in the direction of control of the material estate, it is exceedingly unwise to go out of the way to oppose the new type of education it requires, because one is devoted to a culture of the past. Man's economic education must move with the times, and something even of importance may often be left behind.

But herein lies the danger. It is one of comparative values. For we may stress the economic aspect of the problem so as thoroughly to divorce professional and useful knowledge from the culture of the higher man, and make educational policy terminate on trained minds rather than on disciplined personalities, and this will inevitably lead to a false standard. The vital importance of expert knowledge, the immediate necessities of economic growth have been so imperious that it has been easy to ignore the culture of man, in the interests of more immediate demands. This has been a critical mistake, and many

thoughtful people are beginning to realize it acutely.

For it is becoming increasingly clear that with our vast enlargement of material interests we are identifying the ends of education with utility only and have overlooked the other and less tangible aspect of fertility. Such a conception is as though a farmer should devote all his attention to his growing crops and none to the fertilization of his land. A good farmer knows that productivity depends upon frequent attention to the soil. Periodic fertilization and fallowing, with rotation of crops, are the essentials of continuous utility. This is one of the reasons why so many highly trained men are such poor guides in the unseen realms of life. Their minds are like hard-driven fields whose vitality has been steadily exhausted in the interests of immediate production and, early losing normal connection with life's compensating forces, become unfertile and finally unfruitful. A Ford car is an excellent utility, but I should hardly like to have it as a library

companion. And the same thing may be said of Ford mentalities.

The limitation of trustworthy education to utility alone is an evil in itself, but it becomes infinitely worse when one looks to it for leadership in the wider aspects of life. I have made it a custom in recent years to listen carefully to the casual opinions of successful men, especially of the professional type. I usually find them competent when they deal with matters on which they are expertly informed; but their opinions on the broader phases of culture and their judgments of the significant trends of the time are often so immature as to be unworthy of consideration. The authorities to which they appeal are frequently of no higher value than ephemeral journalism. The class feeds upon periodic literature until it develops an attitude of dogmatism toward all kinds of subjects, most irritating to a balanced intelligence. One of the illusions we are slowly parting with is that all college graduates are educated men. Expertly trained minds are fairly common, but disciplined personalities are by no

means as plentiful as one would desire. Much of our learning is very thinly spread over the surface, while underneath are hosts of undisciplined impulses over which education has little or no control.

The gravest aspect of modern development is the failure to produce a culture favorable to the growth of the higher man. That is why confidence in a non-religious motive is breaking down. No other culmination could have been expected where utility is everything and fertility nothing. L. P. Jacks has observed:

> "The skin of our skeptical culture is very thin. Immediately below it lie the germs of things which in their growth are more surprising, perhaps more poisonous, than the common and predictable tares of ignorance, superstitution, or inherited vice. Dig lightly in that soil."[2]

The most fertile soil for the growth of superstition is not found among the half-educated masses, but rather among the sophisticated expert intelligences that have

[2] "Among the Idolmakers," p. 133.

confounded utilitarian training with the culture of personality. Such are inclined to fall in with those "courtly polygamies of the soul" which more than once lured the ancient man to his doom.

A common objection urged against an education that stresses fertility is that the modern man is occupied with more important and immediate interests. He has no time for dawdling by the way; besides, the old humanities are outmoded. They belong to a dead world. A good answer to this has been made by a great humanist:

> "Many modern preachers warn us—especially vocational experts and other advocates of a single-type education—that the race of life is too swift and too strenuous to allow for any dawdling. Those who pause by the wayside, even to pick up golden apples, are likely, as was Atalanta, to be outdistanced in the race. Well, it is not recorded that Atalanta was disappointed in her apples."[3]

[3]Kirby Flower Smith: "Martial, the Epigrammatist," p. 153.

There is no ignorance like that of the educated, especially where it is confined to professional fitness and ignores communion with the intangible aspect of things. Yet this class has power, and when wrong-headed, as it often is, power to mislead and further to confuse those who look upon them as authorities. For it is easy for one who has made an undoubted success in a single profession or business to imagine that on the strength of this bit of knowledge he has power to govern an empire, or to determine on what terms, if any, a God may control the universe. Some of the crudest opinions on general subjects are put forth by men who are acknowledged masters in a single direction; and the amazing thing is that so many people are still willing to accept this incompetent opinion as authoritative. But good wall builders are not always safe interpreters of the law. Socrates remarked this evil tendency in his time, and his remorseless exposure of the dogmatic ignorance of the half-educated successful classes can still be read with profit in our day.

Our failure to create a culture suitable to the growth of the higher man justifies Spengler's caustic comment, to which reference has been made, that our spiritual distresses have come upon us because we have descended "from the perspective of the bird to that of the frog." The frog knows nothing but the puddle in which he was born. He measures himself by himself, compares himself with himself, and rarely recognizes any other standard than his limited environment. But the bird discerns the surrounding country, in which the puddle is a small and often undesirable part. The birdlike view is the true test of reality, for culture does not consist in knowing all that can be known of a single aspect, but ability to see all round the part, the whole of things. Wisdom justifies itself in the vision of the ends of life. However, the frog philosophers have the ear of the half-educated, while the bird philosophers are at a discount. The humanities are fighting a losing fight with barbarian efficiencies, while fertile spirits are becoming rare among our educated classes.

The economic trends of the time offend every sensitive mind. This is making people of cultural tastes very lonely. Whitehead says that "religion is what the individual does with his own solitariness."[4] But why should one feel lonely in our brilliant and crowded world unless confidence in the current view of life is breaking down? Religion is not solitariness, but begins as one may part with solitariness in the discovery of and participation in some higher cultural experience. But the roots of such culture are religious. Without recognition that religion is the mother of the arts, there can be no fertility in the soil of life sufficient to sustain a permanent culture. That is why the successful man, when he leaves his work to enjoy his leisure, is so often disappointed. "The twilight that he desired is turned into trembling unto him,"[5] and his bitter cry goes up to heaven: "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know

[4] "Religion in the Making," p. 16.

[5] Isaiah 21: 4, R. V.

me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul."[6]

But when the human spirit fully awakes to its loneliness it begins to travel Godward. This movement is often away from things that are hated rather than toward things that are loved, but it is significant of much. Many at present are falling in with superstitions new and old, and there is a distinct trend among the sophisticated toward Stoic and Buddhistic conceptions. Some even take the road to Endor, but all this indicates that the modern man is aware of a need for something beyond temporal relations wherein the distressed spirit may find durable satisfactions. This is a trustworthy indication that our age is breaking from the tyranny of secularism and setting out on new spiritual quests.

If the failure of modern culture to furnish a conception of reality adequate to the spiritual needs of man has occasioned a new religious susceptibility, a more significant factor in the same direction is to be found in the present positions of science.

[6] Psalm 142: 4.

Faith in the stability of the world order is essential to human happiness. Mankind has never been willing for long to be content with a universe of shreds and patches. That which gives peace to the thoughtful mind is faith in some kind of authority. Yet our age has witnessed the breakdown of more than one of these controlling views of life. First the religious view was set aside in favor of the secular conception. Then the authority of philosophy was weakened through preoccupation with parts and a corresponding indifference to wholes. In a world where the immediate test of truth was utility there seemed no need for a general conception of things.

The confidence which safeguarded the modern mind from misgivings was sustained by an almost universal faith in the authority of the scientific spirit. The achievements of science have been so great and beneficial, its methods so sure, and its progress so steady that here man felt he had a conception of enduring value, belief in which would give him control of the future. This confidence, however, was more a

belief of mankind than a claim of science. No class has suffered more in popular esteem than men of science, who have been compelled over and over again to witness their established positions prostituted to sustain questionable dogmas erected upon them in support of some partial view.[7]

Yet faith in the dogma of scientific development has perhaps been the only authoritative conception of the universe that has vitally influenced our time. Belief in providence gave place to confidence in progress, and the future seemed to belong to those minds that had the courage to break with the past and put their faith in the doctrines of science. But science never at any time professed to satisfy the whole of man's needs. At a time when this naïve faith was rampant Paulsen warned us that "whatever temple science may build there will always need to be hard by a Gothic chapel for wounded souls."[8]

Science ordinarily rests upon its solid

[7]For a discussion of this tendency see More: "The Dogma of Evolution," 1925.

[8]"Ethics," p. 162.

achievements and refrains from speculating about the possible bearing its conclusions have upon the future. That is to say, science may do this so long as it confines itself to some special phase of its domain; but if anything should happen to bring science to a frontier of its province, if in its advance it discovered faults not simply in the structure, but in the foundation of its positions, then the man of science would be compelled to turn philosopher and attempt even in a tentative way to deal with the wholes of things in which the several aspects of his subject find their rational meaning.

This is the most significant aspect of progress at the present time. The authority of science is slowly yielding to a profound misgiving, which curiously enough issues from thorough devotion to its ideal. The passion for truth, regardless of consequences, has led to a remarkable result. For if our conception of reality cannot be limited to a phenomenal world—the domain in which science so far has achieved its most confident results—it follows that a relentless pursuit of truth will lead science to a

frontier where it will happen upon something beyond nature. It will come upon a domain different from that in which it has won its laurels. Such a discovery will at once necessitate a revision of the conception of reality and compel the scientific mind to reconsider its capacity to explore and finally to determine what is the nature of that whole of things which gives consistency to its system.

This is precisely what has happened within recent years. Thorough loyalty to truth which enabled physical science to establish what seemed to be permanent positions in the nineteenth century is operating in the twentieth century to destroy confidence in these positions. The flaw is not in the superstructure, but in the foundations. This is not a confession of weakness nor want of care; it is really the merit of science finally to destroy its own certainties, provided always that they cannot stand the test of truth. For if there be an unseen universe around us, science in exploring the seen universe must eventually arrive at its frontiers. And when it becomes aware of

this it must turn to philosophy to sustain confidence in its own conclusions.

But philosophy cannot limit its service to science; it must also reconsider its obligation to the human spirit, and as its ideas develop it finds itself more and more compelled to deal with conceptions that have an unavoidable religious aspect. For one of the most startling positions of present-day science is the admission that it cannot deal with reality; for reality is not something that can be reached through measurement, but must be discerned, if at all, by an attitude of mind akin to faith. The greatest need of the time is for philosophers, but the philosopher of the future will be compelled to approach his main premises through mathematics.

If the present feeling about ultimate reality which pervades the higher scientific minds is any clue, the final position will beyond reasonable doubt make faith the guide to reality. The scientist, the philosopher, and the theologian will unite upon a principle which opens before us a vista of spiritual realizations that must ultimately

have an encouraging influence upon our religiously distracted age.

We must be careful not to attach too much significance to the changes which have occasioned the new conception of reality. The philosophy is not developed, and the future bearing upon the broader aspects of science cannot at present be forecast. I shall limit myself to the change in scientific outlook so admirably discussed by Eddington and Jeans,[9] especially to the comparison drawn between the positions of classical or nineteenth-century physics and those views known under the general term of quantum physics which have developed since the new century opened and which have advanced in a startling fashion within recent years under the term of new quantum physics. The general effect may be expressed as follows:

The two categories which were accepted

[9]Eddington: "Space, Time, and Gravitation," 1920; "The Nature of the Physical World," 1928. Jeans: "The Universe Around Us," 1929. See also: Luckiesh, "Foundations of the Universe," 1925; Burtt, "The Metaphysical Foundations of Physics," 1925; Bertrand Russell, "Philosophy," 1927, p. 292, passim; Dampier-Whetham, "A History of Science," 1929, Chapters ix-x.

as foundation concepts of classical physics were substantiality and constancy. Although it was known before the century closed that the atom could be broken up into protons and electrons, still these smaller particles were *things*. They constituted the ultimate of physical reality and could be taken for granted as bases on which to build a trustworthy view of nature. The category of constancy was based upon the idea, dating from Newton's time, of rigid causation in all natural processes, an immutable law controlling the physical universe from the smallest particle to the most distant star.

One consequence of this was to suppose that if one could make a model of a thing one understood it. The Victorian era in physics was the model-making era. The physicist was an engineer constructing machines, and it was not long before speculative minds derived from the concrete word "machine" the abstract term "mechanism." Such concepts were useful in the organization of special aspects of science, but when applied to the broader phases of life they led to many fantastic theories, which still

distort some of the biological and psychological investigations of our time. The conclusion drawn from such premises was that man was shut up within a law-bound universe and that a materialistic, fatalistic, deterministic view of life was the only one compatible with science at that time. The theological counterparts of this view of nature are well known. In the eighteenth century it was Deism, in the nineteenth century it was Agnosticism, while in the twentieth century, in some quarters at least, Demonism, and in others indifferentism toward the ultimate meaning of life.

Science was not responsible for these views, nor can it ever be held accountable for dogmas founded upon the restricted bases its own approved methods disclose. Yet mankind has been prone to be more susceptible to hasty dogmas than to the restrained influence of sober truth; and the widespread impression that man himself is no more or less than a kind of self-deceived automaton seems to be accepted as a conclusion of science still, and that too in spite of warnings to the contrary.

The changes in physical theory since the century opened have been as radical as a Bolshevist revolution, and the swift alterations within the past four years have given an Alice-in-Wonderland aspect to the sober regions of science. While the popular mind has fixed upon the theory of relativity as the most startling of these changes, it may turn out that the more amazing developments belong to the domain of quantum physics. At any rate, physical science at present is standing on the frontier of a very mysterious world. Moreover, it is in serious difficulties as to the next step to take. Eddington puts it thus: "We have turned a corner in the path of progress, and our ignorance stands revealed before us, appalling and insistent. There is something radically wrong with the present fundamental conceptions of physics, and we do not see how to set it right."[10]

Under the new régime substantiality and constancy have undergone a sea change. It has been shown that the electron is not a substance at all, but only a convenient name

[10] "The Nature of the Physical World," p. 179.

we use to describe radiations in certain localities. Matter has lost every vestige of substantiality and taken on the ambiguous aspect of a ghost. The far more significant demonstration, however, affects the idea of causation. The belief that rigid causation dominates nature throughout has been abandoned—at first tentatively and eventually finally—and this has compelled science to revise its conception of natural law.

Eddington divides natural laws into three types: Identical laws, laws of mathematical identities; statistical laws, which are laws of averages; and transcendental laws.[11] All laws at present known to science, save one, can be grouped under the first or second of these types. The characteristic feature of these laws is that they are mental concepts. In stating them science simply takes back from nature what the mind has put into nature. But quantum laws transcend the mind and appear to be laws of control inherent in nature. Now, the disconcerting characteristic of these quantum laws is *dis-*

[11] "The Nature of the Physical World," pp. 193-199, 244-246.

continuity; they function in ways so erratic as to make it impossible to predict what they will do in a given case. But discontinuity is the sworn foe of constancy and rigid causation; hence it follows that science has discovered something in the very nature of physical reality—laws of control characterized by discontinuity—which prevents us from accepting rigid causation as the only law of the material world.

It is the discovery of discontinuity in nature's process that has occasioned such profound misgivings concerning the capacity of science to unveil the final mysteries or even to explain adequately the nature of the physical world. As Eddington expresses it: "It is only through a quantum action that the outside world can interact with ourselves and knowledge of it can reach our minds. A quantum action may be the means of revealing to us some fact about Nature, but simultaneously a fresh unknown is implanted in the womb of Time. An addition to knowledge is won at the expense of an addition to ignorance. It is

hard to empty the well of Truth with a leaky bucket."[12]

By such means science is steadily restoring a sense of mystery to the universe. No doubt there are amazing metaphysical possibilities in the idea of discontinuity. Science may have unwittingly lighted upon a chink in nature's armor through which any sort of supernaturalism may issue, provided we have independent evidence for such a belief. At any rate, science has broken through the material envelope into an immaterial universe and is pointing the way to a culture more in harmony with the higher necessities of the human spirit.

Another significant change is the reduction of scientific knowledge to symbolic knowledge—to pointer readings. Science can no longer deal with reality. But some kind of reality must be assumed for the sake of consistency. How, then, is it to be reached? Science postulates the existence of a background of reality behind the pointer readings, which is reached, not by experiments, but through an act of faith. It is

[12] *Op. cit.*, p. 229.

a spontaneous expression of mind. But does not this imply the necessity for some philosophy and carry the further suggestion that this philosophy cannot limit itself to the needs of science, but must seek a complete understanding of the problem of reality as a whole? For if science at present shows that physics is as abstract as metaphysics, if it has abandoned model-making and resorted to symbols, does it not compel the formation of a philosophy broader than its own necessities and indicate that its domain is but a partial aspect of something wider? This, at any rate, is Eddington's conclusion.[13]

We must not hastily base a theory of ultimate reality on these positions. They offer not so much a foundation as indicate a need. To my way of thinking, the need is to see things in right relation, and I can make my point clear by an illustration: A stained glass window is made of thousands of fragments, not one of which by itself has any significance. It is true that each bears evidence of the artist's skill, but what they

[13] *Op. cit.*, pp. 331, 332.

mean will depend entirely on how they are organized. That is determined by attaching them to a background of wax strong enough to hold them together but thin enough to permit the admission of light. The whole is then suspended in a window, and the beauty and meaning become evident at once. The observer does not see the wax background, but he knows it is there, and without it the window would be but a pile of broken glass. Is not this, then, implied when Eddington and Jeans speak of present-day science as a jig-saw puzzle? Its pointer readings by themselves are as meaningless as the bits of broken glass. It is only when they are attached to the background that their meaning becomes evident.

But this background exists not as the result of experiment, but as a postulate of faith. And there are other judgments of the same character. There is the æsthetic judgment and the spiritual judgment, and this latter is the most representative of the mind. If such reasoning is at all acceptable, it shows that the scientific postulate

and the spiritual postulate are of the same character, and one is as good as the other. This is Eddington's conclusion: "The sanction for correlating a 'real' physical world to certain feelings of which we are conscious does not seem to differ in any essential respect from the sanction for correlating a spiritual domain to another side of our personality."[14]

However tentative many of the positions of present-day science are, every development of the new quantum phsyics tends to strengthen the conviction that rigid causation is not an adequate category of natural philosophy and that determinism must be finally abandoned. If science must postulate a mental background to give plausibility to its pointer readings, and if it is now content with high degrees of probability, rather than with absolute certainty, then it is not too much to suppose that a day is not far distant when a new philosophy will arise which not only conserves the ancient values, but offers a synthesis of scientific

[14] *Op. cit.*, p. 332.

and human experience more in harmony with the nature of ultimate truth.

The sense of instability in our time has prompted Whitehead to observe that "modern science has imposed on humanity the necessity for wandering."[15] But it seems to be wandering to some purpose, for our present insecurities are making us keenly susceptible to the idea of deliverance from intolerable mental states. Our time has matured certain great thought movements, which clearly indicate that we have failed to develop a culture suited to the needs of the higher man. Moreover, they open the way for a fresh consideration of the spiritual form of life to which, beyond doubt, the present trends of science are directing our attention.

Grant that such impressions shall grow into reasoned convictions, and who knows but that they will develop into a spiritual sensibility, which, like a fresh spring breeze, shall dissipate the sick fumes of our coarser experience and bring to many a weary mind a sense of something present

[15] "Science and the Modern World," p. 298.

in our world, heartening and encouraging? In all this I discern a new splendor of God about to break upon our industrial ages, but from this arises a grave sense of responsibility. Does the Church sense this new spiritual urgency? Can it be called forth and firmly attached to the body of Christ?

For a mind that has moved through the tangled network of scientific concepts to the freedom of the upper air will not be content to confine itself to the commonplace imitations of secularism too long identified with the modern Church's appeal, but will eagerly and gladly embrace a spirit of worship and praise and adoration which confronts the soul with the eternal spirit of God. What our world longs for just now is not a God that must be argued for, but a God whose reality is felt in the higher aspirations of the soul; not a religion of perpetual problems, that requires forever to be proved, but a religion that can be enjoyed in the most rational experiences of the mind. This alone will give assurance of a communion with God that can lift the

human spirit above that which changes and fades, into relationship of permanent value. The world needs the living God. It will not come to a Church whose activities suggest the secularism from which the soul turns with loathing and disgust; but it will again lift its tired eyes unto the hills when we have made the Church a sanctuary of God and restored worship, as the supreme religious act, to its central position. This, at any rate, is my reading of the meaning of the environment in which we are called upon to do our work. If I am right, it indicates a spiritual awakening in the modern world of large dimensions; it suggests a fresh susceptibility to religious appeals; above all, it reveals a new opportunity for the reformed faith. There is spiritual discontent abroad to-day, as it was in Luther's time. The cry that arises from the world's tired heart is: "Lord, I believe; help mine unbelief." If it be true that the "fabric of a vision that worketh great marvels is the experience of common men," then beyond question our age is looking for those clear-voiced leaders who can teach the stam-

mering tongue to speak plainly, those far-visioned spirits who can by sheer weight of personal influence compel the eye to see clearly that all round this futile and disheartening secularity there burns the consuming fire of the eternal God, to agree with which and to confide in it leads to deep and abiding peace.

CHAPTER IV

THE PLACE OF JESUS CHRIST IN HIS OWN RELIGION

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THE spiritual susceptibility abroad at present is more conscious of what it is protesting against than of what it essentially needs for complete satisfaction. Our race is like a flock of birds, disturbed in its old nesting place, flying aimlessly about in search of a more comfortable home, but as yet uncertain where to alight. Our earthly interests have poisoned the atmosphere, and the human spirit is oppressed with a sense of suffocation. The spiritual trends of science which are again directing the thoughtful mind to the threshold of religion are less obvious at present than the narrowing influences of our economic life. The result is that modern religious interest is inspired by discontent with material relations rather than by an enlightened sense of need for spiritual experience.

That there is a deep religious passion at the center of modern unrest is a hopeful

sign of the times. But this by no means indicates any widespread disposition to return to the Church. What impresses me is that this interest is vital only in so far as it is dissociated from a definite phase of belief or specific form of organization. The modern mind is interested in the general idea of religion, but this interest is more often identified with an intense subjectivism than with a discernment that there may be present in our world a religion which can meet the necessities of the soul and guide man's feet into the pathway of peace.

This shows how necessary it is for the Church to reconsider its position in modern society. It must in the most impartial way ask itself why, with this widely diffused type of religious interest, it is not more firmly attaching it to the cause of Jesus Christ. One of the most impressive phases of Apostolic Christianity is the competent way the gospel gathered into worshiping communities multitudes of people who were suffering from the same feeling of spiritual unrest as our modern world. All the elements of need are present among our peo-

ple; yet the Church is not meeting this need in an adequate way. May it not be said, when we have admitted the many fine qualities of our Church life, that the neglect of its appeal may be found in this: that it has allowed itself to become secularized up to the point where distressed minds fail to discern any difference in its aims?

Beyond question, the modern Church has yielded too readily to the influence of the time spirit. A specific evidence of this has been the ease with which it quietly allowed its aims and purposes to become identified with a conception of social evolution, seriously impaired, if not entirely discredited by the Great War.

The closing decades of the nineteenth century witnessed the culmination of a theory of social evolution which promised, at no distant future, a kind of millennium. It usually went by the name of the cosmic process. It took for granted that the ruling law of nature was the law of causation, that there was an unbroken continuity manifest in nature which was directing itself toward social and moral fulfillments, and that even-

tually this law would produce human societies of increasing potentials of merit. This idea was very appealing because it was entirely new.

The ancients knew nothing of a law of progress, neither was it a conspicuous conception of the Middle Ages. It was born in France, naturalized in Britain, and finally found a most congenial home in America. But the shock of a world war, the effect not of some evil intrusion into our social order, but the direct fruitage of the kind of thinking that had been going on in our world for the past three hundred years, has very seriously impaired confidence in this law, if not among the more discerning minds destroyed faith in it altogether. At any rate, nothing is more significant just now of a change of front among the higher minds than a loss of confidence in social progress. The world of shreds and patches presented in our modern literature, the passionate absorption in parts and the shrinking from looking to the wholes of things, the zeal for analysis of immediate impressions, and the fear of a synthesis which

marks much of our intellectual life show evidence enough of modern disenchantment.

Now, nothing could have been more unlike this unlimited confidence in social progress than the Christian doctrine of redemption, and when the Church felt the pressure of the new view of things it quietly permitted the notion of redemption to fall into the background, and while still using the old language it attached modern meanings to the words. Uncertainly holding to the redemptive idea, the Church gradually adopted the new interpretations, and the words "progress" and "development" became slogans of advancing religious movements. A further step in accommodation was the encouragement given to identify the Biblical idea of the kingdom of God with social development and Western civilization. I remember with what agony I listened to an address on missions, given before the war, in which the speaker said that one of the most powerful appeals that could then be made to China was to say that if China accepted Christianity it would become like America because the social devel-

opment and industrial expansion which had attained their highest form in the West would follow as effects of the acceptance of the Christian religion. This, of course, was an utter perversion of the New Testament idea, but at first it appeared to be in harmony with advancing thought; for a kingdom of God, identified with Western civilization, growing better and better day by day through the cosmic process were easier to believe in than one founded upon the austere conception of redemption. At any rate, it was more in accord with the modern feeling for comfortableness. It made man very much at home in the world and offered him a religion of facile adjustments to the changing aspects of life.

But we know better now. The cosmic process brought no millennium, but the most destructive war in history. Confidence in progress has been seriously impaired. But the strangest phase of the thing is that the Church is still content to use the popular language; seems as yet but vaguely aware that the attitude of man toward ultimate problems has radically

changed into a more tragic phase, an aspect to which the old appeals based on social adjustments mean nothing. And in so far as this impression becomes definite it tends to make the Church appear, to those who need it most, hideously deformed by secularism—the hated image of the very thing against which man is protesting with all his might.

For the modern man is beginning to realize that the supreme problem is social control and that, somehow or other, behind the need for social order there must be found moral and spiritual sanctions. The hope that moral progress would go hand in hand with intellectual and material expansion has proved illusive. We now know better than to expect the spread of democratic doctrine, popular education, or even scientific knowledge to furnish what in the nature of the case must be found elsewhere.

It must not be overlooked that the gravest warnings come to us from the higher scientific minds, for science at present is working at the problem of available energy. The extreme complexity of the modern

world—its congested urbanization, its intensified restlessness, its frightful ugliness —results from recent developments in energy potentials. But what will happen if science should put into our hands a higher form of energy still? What if from cosmic rays or sub-atomic energy science endow man with forces inconceivable? Will not the problem be, not what will man do with these forces, but what will they do to him and his societies? Can man as we know him at present be safely intrusted with these powers? Science cannot furnish, nor does it profess to do so, a moral sanction for social control. That must be sought, if anywhere, in another realm entirely. For the social philosopher who has the courage to think the subject through to the roots must realize that this is *the* problem of modern society. Without a vision of Something potent enough to influence conduct, the people perish because they cast off restraint.

If I am right in thinking that there is something tragic at the heart of modern experience, which will no longer be content

with solutions based on outmoded theories of social development, can we wonder that people will not listen to the voice of a Church that was born in tragedy, nurtured in martyrdom, and lived dangerously in spite of the worst the world could do to it, when it changes its emphasis in face of the same necessity? This explains why thoughtful people draw back from commonplace invitations to return to something which outwardly seems so much a part of the secular world. An uncritical and optimistic belief in progress has always appealed more potently to easy-going minds that were quick to jump with the way of the times rather than to those lonely spirits who took their share in the hardships and courageously stood behind the times. May it not be that the modern Church has lost its authority because it has sold its birthright of spiritual singularity for a very poor mess of pottage?

I am convinced that the current belief in religion as a culmination of a naturalistic process, as over against a religion of redemption, will not much longer continue. For, as I see it, no idea could possibly meet

with greater acceptance to the deeper moods of the time than a religion of redemption. Life is too tragic now to be content with anything less than this. If the modern man is to return to the Church, then beyond doubt it must offer the tragic implications of his existence a remedy more tragic still. For only thus will the appeal of a religion touch the deepest necessities of the soul.

The need for a religion of redemption arises out of certain culminations in our time which turn man's thoughts from the notion of unbroken continuity on which the confident expectations of our immediate past were founded to those catastrophic elements in historical process which confront the mind with the ideas of contingency, uncertainty, and emergency. And these have more than once been provocative of profound quickenings of the religious spirit. Whitehead has observed that "in the immediate future there will be less security than in the immediate past, less stability. It must be admitted that there is a degree of instability which is inconsistent with civili-

zation. But on the whole the great ages have been the unstable ages."[1]

The psalmist says of certain people of his time: "Because they have no changes, they fear not God." It is never so easy to lose one's God as in times of extreme stability. When the world seems solid under foot, when society follows a predictable course, when it is easy to sustain the *status quo* and every man stands in his own place with a sort of acquiescence in his social status—then indeed man may be content with a nebulous conception of religion.

The Church came to the close of the nineteenth century with a firm dependence upon economic security and had developed its activities around the idea of comfortableness. The popular notion of continuity underlying the current theory of social progress seemed to fit in with expectations that a millennium would at no distant day break upon the world, and the teaching and preaching of the Church were adjusted to this program. Thus religion was merged with humanism, clothed in the ephemeral

[1] "Science and the Modern World," p. 229.

interests of the time, identified with humanitarianism and various phases of superficial reform until it would seem as if the voice of the Church was directed chiefly to making every one comfortable in the world. Of no body of believers can it more truly be said: "They were more at home in Zion than they had any right to be." At home because at ease in Zion. This puny spirit would almost have turned God into a humanitarian. But

> "'Was God 'humane' when Jesus died?
> Had your God then his counsel given,
> Christ at the cross for grace had cried—
> And the redemption signified
> A diplomatic note from Heaven.'"[2]

But that age of security has given place to one of extreme instability. The great forces of the world—race and sex and life—have left their predictable course and are now moving in directions that portend vast alterations in the face of society. The deep tragic elements are again invading man's thoughts. A sense of instability in material things, a feeling of eternity disturbs his contentment, and, taking leave of the old

[2] Ibsen, "Brand," p. 111.

securities, man is venturing forth upon a religious quest.

No religion can touch this mood that is not capable of confronting the soul amid its tragic experiences with a power more tragic still. Jesus described the kingdom of heaven as leaven. Religion is yeast, and man's life is the dough. This means that religion is felt to be real when it can confront the radical instabilities of life as a spiritual ferment. When it is content to be as inactive as the dough itself, it loses its appeal. That is what Jesus meant by the salt that has lost its savor. Appealed to once in London by a distracted young woman, I advised her to put herself under the care of a certain famous preacher. She vehemently replied: "I will not, because whenever I hear him he sprays me with scent!" I know what she meant. A Church that is trying to meet the tragic implications of our present life by saying it with flowers must somehow learn to speak to the world's heart in the name of the Cross.

The Church is aware of this need, but how do we respond to it? We are extreme-

ly shy of the Cross. We speak hesitatingly about sin. We are afraid of the idea of redemption. We do not like to tell this splendid age that it is lost and in need of the mercy of God. Many are overfond of the suburban life of Zion and flee from the grave duties imposed upon them by the scrambling of races and the sudden shiftings of populations in our great cities. We justify this restlessness on the ground that the Church must follow the people; but it is rather unconvincing when we remember that by people we mean the "nice" people, and we part with our claim to sincerity when we give to our congregational life an aspect of material comfort and worldly prosperity strangely unlike that of the old pilgrim Church, which, although traveling about the world, gathered into it a great multitude of people of all races and colors and led them confidently into the fold of the Lord. The modern Church, with all its excellencies, does not seem to know where it is going. The early Church did. That is why a polyglot race trusted it, and a Church that claims to be divinely led must

be able to stand up to a changing environment.

I confidently affirm that such diluted loyalty to the essential truths of the gospel will never seriously touch the fundamental needs of our time. The Church is slowly beginning to realize this, but how do we usually go about meeting the need? Instead of boldly preaching salvation in the name of Jesus we go about trying to prove that religion is true. The habit of some to be ever dressing and undressing the religious idea in the garments of current philosophies and psychologies further increases the present confusion and tempts many who are vaguely searching for a redemptive religion to seek solutions for their problems in something other than religion.

Some look for guidance to science; others lose themselves in a psychological maze; still others try to take the strain from life by exposing the soul to æsthetic reactions of a religious subjectivism, a religion without revelation and without God. But deep within the heart there is an imperious desire to find something concrete in our un-

stable world to which the human spirit may attach itself in the confident hope that it has found an abiding resting place. The ordinary man in search of this foundation is often constrained to ask when facing the annual output of "scholastical squitter-books" put forth in the name of religion: "But where may hide what came and loved our clay?"

The last stage of ambiguity is reached when people are invited to put their trust in abstractions. It is indeed strange that many imagine that an abstract notion of God is more appealing than the vital conception of the gospel. We used to hear much of the "over-soul" of the "great mother sea of being" and of the "parent source of the universe." I once heard a theological neophyte speak of "that fundamental ethical substratum which energizes at the basis of the cosmic process which is commonly called God." Recently I came upon the suggestion that it were best now to identify the idea of God with the fourth dimension. Can you imagine a man at close grips with reality responding to a

necessity for prayer saying, "Our Fourth Dimension, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name"? If so, then truly the way to peace is open only for the mathematicians.

No, what our age wants is a concrete, dependable, and historical conception of God wherein man shall be assured that he is dealing with an authentic life capable of understanding the sharp stresses and strains of his moral experience, yet by it lifted into confident communion with the Father which is in heaven. Man is in search of something on which he can build his hope with a reasonable assurance that he is not going to be disappointed. He wants something amid the changing scenes of life that does not change. Above all, he desires to hear and follow and confide in an authentic Word of God without waiting for a complete philosophy of the universe. Reveal this to man, inspire him to believe in it with all his might, and he will follow it to the ends of the earth. That is why the Church must turn again and again to the central position of Jesus Christ in his own religion. For it was just this shyness of

Jesus taken at the New Testament level that prompted H. G. Wells to say: "Truly the Galilean has proven too great for our small hearts!"

If, then, with all our zeal and sincerity we have so far failed to impress the redemptive greatness of Jesus upon our spiritually distracted generation because we have for the most part been trying to make God in our own image, might we not succeed if we had the courage to present an authentic gospel that makes God in the image of Jesus Christ?

What, then, are we to think of Jesus Christ? He is the most provocative person in history. He challenges the best thought of every generation, because what we think of him will determine what we are to believe about Christianity. If we believe that Christ is the final manifestation of God to man, we can justify that belief only by asking, What are the criteria of an authentic Word of God? What would be the qualities of an appeal that would effectually satisfy the deepest needs of human nature

and at the same time inspire confidence in it as a revelation from God?

The answer to this question must be sought for in two directions: first, to determine what are man's most essential religious needs, and, second, what evidence have we that God has appealed to them in ways that are permanently satisfying. The way to understand man's fundamental religious needs is clearly indicated in the definition of religion used in a previous chapter. Religion is "the effective desire to be in right relation to the Power manifesting itself in the universe." Analyzed into its constituent elements, we obtain the qualities which persist in some form in man's religious experiences in all phases of history. First is the sense of dependence upon something other than himself. Second, a feeling of not being in right relation to that something on which he depends. Third, active efforts to rid the mind of inconsistency through the performance of certain acts, rites, and ceremonies, and the offering of sacrifices and propitiations from which de-

velop religious cultus and practice. Fourth, the longing for a human life in God.

No appeal could be accepted as of the essence of revelation that did not speak directly to these abiding human elements. But that which has had most influence and which has inspired man's quests for some authentic Word of God is the second of these elements—the need for moral adjustment to the universe. The problem of a right relation has been the main inspiration of religious history. How can man get right with God? is the most pressing of human questions. The search for an answer was until recently the inspiration of man's cultural life.

The New Testament gospel answers this significant question. The sense of dependence is met by the revelation of Divine Fatherhood; maladjustment to the moral order is explained in the Christian doctrine of sin as the principle of separation from the life of God; the need for adjustment is satisfied in the conception of the atonement; while the longing for a human life in God is fulfilled in the fact of incarnation.

But the power of Christianity depends upon the position assigned to Jesus Christ in his own religion. This is not the place for elaborate argument, but one may affirm with confidence that the union of human need with Divine mercy has always justified the belief that Jesus Christ was the final manifestation of God to man. Paul has stated the truth with convincing potency: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." That was the burden of apostolic preaching. The union of the redemptive gospel with the vital spiritual hunger of the time called out and sustained the Church in the Greco-Roman world.

There is a spiritual hunger abroad at present as intense, as earnest, and as distracted as that which characterized the first Christian century. Responsiveness to the appealing simplicity of the gospel is as encouraging as then. Why does not the modern Church more thoroughly attract to it the hungry and restless multitudes of our time? The answer in part at least is found in a shifting of emphasis from the center to the circumference. Jesus was the center of

apostolic faith; he is too often placed at the circumference of ours. The redemptive aspect of religion has been subordinated to a conception more in accord with a phase of human development within the limits of the present world.

The idea of destiny has faded from the modern mind and left man immersed in immediate interests. He is so busy trying to make the machine work that he has almost forgotten where he is going. But not wholly so, for at times he does think about terminal facilities. He will ask in spite of himself whether his present possessions are adequate for the whole of his experience; and when overtaken by such thoughts he becomes aware of something tragic within the soul, a homesickness for something above and beyond this present world of external activities, belonging to an eternal order; and in this graver mood he finds little to comfort or strengthen in the soft and attenuated conceptions that still too much occupy the minds of some of our modern preachers. For when man is compelled to face change and contingency in a world that once seemed

so secure and self-sufficient, he will not be content with anything less than a new kind of stability, a something spiritual, in fact, quite unlike the commonplace appeals of the present time.

The popular presentation of Jesus is too weak to attract the sterner needs of human nature. The Jesus of ephemeral literature is presented in a very appealing way—as a glorious young man, an idealist, an apocalyptic dreamer, a prophet and moral teacher. Others identify him with their private preferences—to one he is a socialist, to another a reformer, and still to another a perfect rotarian, which evidences the universality of the Man, but just the same is secularization run mad. There is nothing here to grip the graver moods of the soul, nothing to touch the deep disillusion of the modern mind. For if I know anything of the insurgent spiritual passion of our time, what man longs for, what he is looking for in religion is a Master who can lay his cool hand upon the fevered brow of the world and again inspire it to take up a heavenly pilgrimage. There is nothing of enduring val-

ue in this all-too-human Jesus to capture and hold the allegiance of man's most representative desires.

Can you imagine such a Jesus appealing to the Greco-Roman mind or calling forth a Church that persisted in face of the worst the world could do? For unless we can find in Christ something as tragic in the way of remedy for the graver necessities of our present experience our notion of him will finally be rejected by those who are compelled to seek for something that comes to a more thorough grip with the austere implications of life. That is why we should be asking ourselves: "What do we think of Christ? What place should he have in his own religion?"

When one opens the New Testament one is struck with the fact that the whole movement is centered in the person of Jesus. He was at its center from the beginning, and about the authenticity of this there was no misgiving. On the contrary, it was confidence in this mighty truth that gave power to the gospel. So soon as he had won the love and loyalty of his disciples, Jesus be-

gan to unfold the significance of his personality. In an intimate conversation he talked to them somewhat after this fashion: "This movement with which you are identified is going to be a radical and revolutionary experience. Your message will disturb not only chance acquaintances, but members of your own household. You will early lose your popularity, and sometimes your life will be in jeopardy. This will tempt you to be silent about me. But I will have none of it. It is not enough that you should believe in me; you must testify for me. If you confess me before men, I will confess you before my Father in heaven; but if you deny me before men, I will deny you before my Father in heaven."[3]

No such confident voice has ever sounded in this world. No ancient or modern teacher of religion or morals has ever had the courage to speak in such an authoritative fashion as Jesus did. Not even the most unfriendly critic of Christianity would deny that Jesus put himself at the center of this movement or that the apostles accepted this

[3] See Matthew 10.

position as the only one adequate to the facts. Furthermore, one is constrained to admit that it was precisely this centrality of Jesus that gave such convincing and persuasive power to the gospel appeal. It was the preaching of a redemptive religion based upon the divine authority of Jesus Christ that called out and nourished the early Church.

The tragic mistake of the popular notion of Jesus lies in a shifting of emphasis from the center to the circumference of the movement. This tempts us to classify Jesus with other religious teachers or to interpret Christianity as one of several phases of a general human development toward a religious ideal. When this happens, the power of its appeal is lost, and it changes one's notion of Christianity in every essential particular.

Christianity is a historical religion. It is not a religious philosophy nor a system of ethics, but a religion of events. What we think of Christ will determine what we think of Christianity. The reason for this is that Christianity is essentially the reli-

gion of a person. Let us compare Christianity with two other types of religion. Mohammedanism is a religion of a book, the Koran. It is not the personality of the founder or faith in his person that makes one a Mohammedan. That is determined by loyalty to the sacred book. As long as the faithful hold to this the cult will function, even in face of changing views as to the importance of the founder. Buddhism is a religion of a way. It has a literature—a great collection of legends associated with its founder—but faith in the literature or belief in the founder is quite subordinate to the suggestion of a way of life. If one follow this way thoroughly, he will finally attain unto the great peace. The religion functions generally through fanatical devotion to the way of deliverance from the sick fatigue of the world.

Now, Christianity is certainly a way of life; it also has the Bible—the book of essential significance to the understanding of the movement. But after we have said this it remains true that the Christianity of the apostles was the religion of a person.

Without attachment to the person of Jesus there would have been neither a way of living nor a book of record of the significance of the teaching. It was the firm and glad confidence in Jesus as the supreme revelation and manifestation of God that inspired the apostles to preach redemption to the Greco-Roman world.

That Jesus Christ must ever be held central to his own religion appears to me absolutely essential from the following considerations. Belief in God is not the same thing at all as belief in Jesus. This difference is often lost sight of on the part of those who are trying in the name of some current philosophy or psychology to prove that God exists. Our religion rests not upon a proof of God's existence, but upon the authenticity and adequacy of Jesus Christ, and many are forgetting this. Belief in God—that is, a God of some kind—does not need proof; it rises naturally out of the constitution of the mind. That it is there at the center of man's most active thoughts can hardly be denied. But it is only when he seeks to define the meaning of this idea that

man gets into difficulties, for then he finds that it is not the idea of God, but the determination what kind of a God one believes in, that is the chief desire of the mind. For belief in God by itself has no essential moral value. It does not constrain one to lead a good life; on the contrary, it may quickly degenerate into superstition and wholly mislead the mind.

What is wanted is some authentic Word of God, some divine disclosure of what he really is. To put it bluntly, what man desires is not a philosophical demonstration of God, but a revelation of God that directly appeals to the deepest and most enduring elements in human experience. A Jesus who can be fitted into a temporal scheme will not long hold sway there, simply because, in spite of his absorption in this world, man knows at times that his real life belongs to an unseen world, and no religion can permanently hold our confidence that does not relocate the soul in the eternal scheme of things.

The eternal aspects of Christianity become evident when we compare belief in

Jesus with the popular belief in God, for belief in Jesus differs in two significant ways from belief in God. First of all, it is never easy or natural; it is an acquired belief hard to comply with and equally difficult to hold in the face of opposition. In the second place, this kind of belief is real only when it compels a man to change his attitude toward life in every essential particular. In Christ man must become a new creature, and one aspect of this change is that the new man is put into total opposition to the trends of the old life. Christ must first become a disturbing force before he can be a tranquilizing force. That is why faith in Jesus radically alters man's relation to everything. That is why, too, the modern man, when weary of this ambiguous world, when overtaken by homesickness for an eternal order of experience, will not tarry long with an all-too-human Jesus who has no word of authority to guide him to the goal of his highest needs.

One of the strangest obsessions of the time is our habit of making too much of a human Jesus and too little of the God re-

vealed by Jesus. Perhaps we do this because we think we know God very well. But do we? If one be disposed to think seriously about the matter, it will most certainly appear that the idea of God apart from Jesus is just as mysterious to-day as it was to the ancient mind. That is why so many struggle to evade their ignorance by reducing the idea of God to an abstraction. Many modern definitions of God are but "inventories of our ignorance, the retrospect of the beauty we have lost."

Without a belief in a personal God, perhaps the best one can do is to fall in with Julian Huxley's notion of a "religion without revelation," which upon examination turns out to be the identification of religion with the æsthetic aspects of the universe, an unstable position at best and without enduring value. But if belief in a personal God is to influence life effectually, we must return to the God whom Jesus reveals. Upon examining this idea we shall make two discoveries: one is that what we most confidently know of God we have learned from Jesus, and the other is that what we believe

God to be depends absolutely upon the authority we are willing to give Jesus himself. For he only is the source of our knowledge. How do we know that God is love? or pity? or compassion? From whence comes faith in the sublime quality of forgiveness? All these conceptions come from Jesus. Thorough reflection should constrain an honest mind to accept without misgiving the word of Jesus: "No man cometh unto the Father but by me."

Jesus imparts this confidence to his words, not because he is a teacher of religion or the founder of an ethical system, but because he is the revelation of God in the supreme aspect of redemption. This redemptive appeal is the only one that reaches the depths of human necessity. The weak, sentimental, attenuated Jesus of popular religious literature can never disclose the profounder aspects of Christianity nor permanently hold the confidence of sincere minds in face of the pressures of life. For Christianity is the religion of power, centered in the person and authority of Christ as the revealer of God. But that revelation is of the essence

of redemption. It is not directed toward nor limited by a temporal world order. It directly contradicts and opposes itself to the popular notion of a human development in which religion is just one phase of the cultural expansion of mankind. Redemption contemplates man under an eternal order of things and founds itself upon the postulate that God himself has taken the initiative. The Divine initiative is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

If this be true, it were well to face an alternative. If the popular view of Jesus has so far failed to bring man to the goal of his hopes because it does not reach unto the tragic deeps of his soul, does it not raise the question, if the current notion be the only true one, that Christianity itself has failed? Many at any rate are inclined to take this pessimistic view, to their own hurt. My own belief is somewhat paradoxical: the more the popular conception of Jesus fails, the more does it evidence a necessity for a higher view of Christ, and the more essential it is that we should reconsider the place that Jesus has in his own religion.

If this higher view should appear to be essentially redemptive, if it refuse to waste its energy on temporal relations and boldly advances into an eternal order, may we not hope to see our disillusioned generation turning to it again, because it alone can awaken the desire to go on pilgrimage and give man assurance that he is not going to be disappointed? To this radical position we moderns must come, for a conception of Jesus limited to the temporal order is failing to appeal to our time. May we not then turn our attention to the central authority of Christianity which shall again quicken in human hearts the inspiring and regenerating power of the eternal order of things?

Jesus compels us to this kind of thinking. Toward the close of his ministry he reminded the disciples that he was not particularly interested in current notions of his person and work, but directly asked them what they thought of him. We know Peter's answer and the reply of Jesus. Not upon a frail mortal called Peter, least of all upon a pope or sacramental Church claiming apostolic authority, but upon that bold and

simple confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," did Jesus found his Church, and the gates of hell have not prevailed against it.

It is of the utmost importance that we should realize the significance of this great foundation principle, for mark this well, that confession and the life it inspires is the only thing in the universe that has been able to conquer the temporal order of things. Philosophies may wax and wane, civilizations rise and fall, epochs come and go, because these all share in the frailty of mortal things. But a life founded on the great confession alone survives because it is rooted in the eternal order of things.

It does not matter just now whether many outside the Church believe this, but it does tremendously matter that those responsible for its leadership should believe it, for it is just possible that the present uneasiness about the durability of the Church is due to a want of appreciation of this truth. If Jesus is made over in the likeness of a secular civilization, then he shares in the impermanence of a temporal order; but if we con-

ceive him as the concentrated essence of the eternal order, we shall lift the spirit of man into the only atmosphere in which it can live. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Well, indeed, will it be for us to take heed how we build thereupon!

CHAPTER V

ASPECTS OF THE COMING REFORMATION

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Spiritual sensibility is an encouraging sign of the times. It indicates that the modern man is convinced that a secular culture cannot take the place of religion and that he is looking about for some authentic Word of God to which he may attach himself in the confident expectation that he will be guided to the goal of his hopes. At present, however, this interest is extremely unstable. It is sketchy, ambiguous, impatient, and impressionistic, and quite indisposed to attach itself to any definite form of belief. If it is to have enduring value, it must be associated with institutions which can direct it to worth-while forms of service. Without this, religious sensibility is likely to degenerate into superstition.

The last century before Christ witnessed an intense hunger for God, with indifference to definite forms of belief, and finally

degenerated into demonism—the tyranny of elemental spirits. Something akin to this may yet issue from the new conceptions of science. The idea of determinism, the foundation postulate of classical physics, while in a great measure banishing mystery from the universe, did give assurance that we were living in a lawful world. The new conception of indeterminism, the foundation postulate of quantum physics, confronts us with a dilemma: whether it is better to live in a universe where nothing is determined than in one where everything is determined? The idea of chance is no more acceptable than the idea of fate.

The strong feeling expressed in popular literature, that we are living in a world of shreds and patches in which the only interest is to be found in immediate sensations, may gain some confirmation from this tendency. For it is just possible that through the chink in nature's armor suggested by the quantum physics a new demonism may issue forth—a kind of germ theory of gods; and if this should attach itself to the spiritual yearning of the time we may witness

a wild riot of superstitions, a tendency to identify the spirits of the universe with evil, which, so far from affording deliverance, may further enslave the mind. The danger is a very real one that this feeling of spiritual need may degenerate into a decadent mysticism. "This mysticism has but little to do with the Gothic architecture of the Middle Ages. It is a self-conscious mysticism which leads men in a quest of sensations and breaks up the idea of one Universal God into small fragments, each one of which becomes a subject of adoration by the faithful. It is as if the human race were incapable of recognizing a great ideal: only after it has crumbled away do the faithful pick up reverently the broken fragments that once were part of a mighty structure."[1] But if these particles of divinity should identify themselves with the spirit of evil we shall have a revival of demonism as depressing as that which cursed the Greco-Roman world.

This vague sense of spiritual need must be captured by rational appeals and direct-

[1] Starkie: "Luigi Pirandello," 1926, p. 16.

ed into stable institutional relationships if it is to have enduring value. Herein lies the opportunity of the Church. It must try to understand the new need; it must face the question, Why does this growing spiritual susceptibility not more eagerly attach itself to the Church? The task of bringing the modern man to a definite belief is by no means easy. It calls for courage of a very high order, for patient and impartial scrutiny of the Church itself. For before it can meet the new needs the Church must ask itself if it is worthy of being trusted. In recent years my own mind has been engaged in a simplification of emphasis in respect to many important positions. It all leads back to the Reformation.

A direct challenge comes from the heart of our time to justify our reformed faith. Some say that the Reformation has had its day, that, although effective in its own time, it is now a spent force. It is the habit of impressionistic minds to suggest that Protestantism is breaking up, while others make bold to assert that perhaps the Reformation

was a mistake, that the position of religion would be better to-day had there never been this unfortunate separation from the parent Church.

The present-day Church is full of strange inconsistencies. Some rigidly refuse to modify or change one jot or tittle of Reformation doctrine. Some would cast aside every trace of Reformation influence, while others are much taken up with a colorful medievalism without God, a kind of high sacramentarian atheism. What are we to make of such things? For myself, I cannot find it in my heart to apologize for the Reformation or to be ashamed of my spiritual heritage. But such a position carries the obligation to justify it, not by referring to the solid achievements of the past, but by showing that the principles of the reformed faith have validity for the modern world. That is why I am raising the question. If we are adequately to meet the subtle suggestion that it is time to abandon our distinctive position in favor of a larger synthesis of religious forces, we must be able to show that what is distinctive of the re-

formed faith is as vital for our time as it was for the sixteenth century.

What was the distinctive principle of the Reformation? That principle will be found, I apprehend, in the meaning of the term Protestant. This term was intended not only to deny but to affirm something. The reformed protest was not confined to saying that some things were false, but also that some things were eternally true.

The Protestant principle as held by Luther differed from that of Zwingli and Calvin;[2] that, whereas the protest of Luther was aimed at Jewish elements in the old faith and his principle that of justification by faith, the protest of Zwingli and Calvin went deeper and aimed at the pagan elements in the old faith and made the conception of Divine Sovereignty in salvation the fundamental principle of the reformed faith. And this latter, beyond question, is the essential theological principle of the reformed Churches throughout the world to-day. The protest of the reformers was against putting the creature in place of the

[2] Hastie: "Theology of the Reformed Church," pp. 32-35.

Creator. It was frankly designed to keep man in the place to which he belonged, not only as a product of nature, but as a child of grace. For when you accept without misgiving the fundamental truth that God alone is sovereign you assure man his supreme place in and over nature. By this faith he attains victory over the world, becomes a king and priest in God's house, and such a faith at once arouses that deep and inspiring fear of the Lord which is the essence of worship, makes humility the chief characteristic of man's inner life, and at the same time guarantees to him, in face of whatever is to be met, the mastery of the world. It was such an experience of liberation that made Protestantism the parent of civil and religious freedom and produced that type of character which, because it feared God so much, feared not the face of man.

It is beyond question true that the reformers had no misgivings about the Eternity and Onliness of God. How could they in face of their reasoned faith in the gospel of reconciliation? That which justified

their separation from the old Church was the ambiguous conception then prevailing concerning this most vital of all truths. God alone was Sovereign; God alone was Great; God alone was the Author of Salvation. Faith in this truth was the guaranty to man of his spiritual singularity, his mastery over nature, and his ultimate self-realization as a son of God.

Such is not a truth of time, but of eternity. It is not something that is attached to changing circumstances, but enters into the heart of reality. If, then, a tendency to put the creature in place of the Creator or, to put it otherwise, to found salvation upon a diluted idea of God and an exaggerated importance of man justified the reformed position in the beginning, it follows that whenever in the course of human events thought movements arise which tend to dilute the conception of Deity and overemphasize the importance of man, then shall the protest which lies at the root of our reformed faith and the positive principle which animates our religious convictions be needed. In meeting adequately this im-

perious necessity we shall find justification for our mission.

Surely I need not labor the question with you, but simply state it, that a far more formidable phase of creature worship has arisen in our modern world than that which justified the reformed position in the sixteenth century. That against which the reformers protested was creature worship within the Church. The difference between the old Church and the reformers was a difference well within the territory of religious faith. The present-day form of idolatry is not a matter within the Church, but an opposition not only to the Church, but to the very idea of God itself. It is not, as with the reformers, a difference between a paganized Christianity and its New Testament type, but a setting up against religion of something that is not religious at all, something secular and earthly. It is the spirit of the world against the Spirit of God. Mark this well, that wherever the reformed principle has been understood it has been unpopular, but its unpopularity is proof of its reality. It is and ever will be

an uncompromising protest against every form of creature worship. It is naturally hostile to the modern trend of a man-made God, whether it be the corpuscular theory of the Pluralist or the pale projection of a human image on the screen of eternal mystery from the dubious regions of the subconscious mind.

I believe in the future of our reformed faith not only because it effectively purged the idolatrous elements from the Church of the Middle Ages, but also because it is more needed now as the chief opponent of the debasing and soul-chilling secularism which has grown out of the very forces that occasioned the Reformation.

The Reformation was a protest against creature worship in every phase, and to overcome this grave deformation of the old Church it placed emphasis upon the sovereignty of God in salvation and life. To awake unto the reality of God, to experience him in deep emotions of the soul was the essence of worship and the inspiration of creative growth. If the reformed Church can bring to the modern world this tremen-

dous and inescapable realization of God, it will do more than all other influences to call it back to the central sanctuaries of peace and power.

Theism is the inevitable and logical goal of all philosophic thought worthy of the name, but by itself it is not enough. We must bring home to the time a fresh realization of historical Christianity, a historic realism that has sustained itself from generation to generation in the spirit of the living Church.

In making this great truth clear to our time it seems essential that the Church itself should undergo a new reformation, a reformation in the interests of simplicity and intensification of energy. We cannot return to the elaborate systems or strange phraseology of the Middle Ages. We must stand ready with generous minds to receive light from any source. We should eagerly welcome all forms of new knowledge, fearlessly submit our inherited traditions to a sound criticism, exercise hospitality to new categories of thought in so far as they make truth evident to our time. All this we must

do and at the same time hold with a profound and rational determination the conviction that God has once for all manifested himself in Jesus Christ our Lord and strive to make the spirit of this tremendous truth evident in all human relations.

The modern Church with all its fine qualities does not seem to be able to inspire confidence because of uncertainty in its message and confusion as to its vocation. This has come about because the Church has too readily yielded to secular influences. It shifted its emphasis from redemption to a popular conception of social religion. It seems in many aspects of its mission to belong to a temporal rather than to an eternal order.

Yet it is just this vague sense of an eternal need that causes the modern seeker after God to distrust the Church. The immediate task is to recover its God-consciousness. Its work is done in an earthly environment, but its true life belongs to an eternal realm. The sense of eternity depends upon one's consciousness of God. Man cannot live by bread alone, even when it is the bread of a

highly developed civilization. The Church lives upon every word of God, and at the center of its life is the profound conviction of the absoluteness and finality of God. Only from this persuasion can the Church speak with authority to the timeless elements in human nature and lift man above the tyranny of a temporal order. And if the Church lose this guiding principle, it directly challenges Providence to send it upon a captivity wherein through affliction and heart-searching it returns to the source of its being.

The Babylonian captivity of the chosen people was a drastic and humiliating experience, but from that lonely exile they gained their highest conception of God. The present-day Church is entering upon a period of exile. Its growing feeling of insecurity, the loss of confidence in a shallow type of social religion, and the restlessness of its leaders suggest the approach of a disciplinary experience. Efflorescence is always preceded by disintegration, and the premonitory evidences of fresh awakenings are usually painful.

The startling changes in scientific outlook, the swift alterations in the face of society, and the spreading discontents of our splendid economic civilization signify the approach of a new renaissance. I believe a reformation will issue from it as drastic and beneficial as that of the sixteenth century.

Usually the people of God do not willingly take the high road; they must be driven to it by pressure of necessity. The Church at present is quite unwilling to face its own discords. In Europe, where the changes in outlook are felt to be more drastic, there is a sober disposition to reconsider the status of religion. In America our attitude, although conscious of some disturbance, is like the shallow optimism that prevailed among the chosen people in Palestine prior to the fall of Jerusalem before the Babylonians. We are still disinclined to face the facts that call for thorough reform in the Church. That is why an estimate of our present distresses offers little solace for weak and shallow natures. It were best that all such, however, should be sifted out

of the Church in order that the sturdy spirits may come into their own. The times call loudly for prophets like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, but, although there be many of their quality among us, they will hardly be heeded until the time for smooth speaking has passed.

In my judgment, the great truth that will lead to a new reformation—a truth potent enough to relocate the Church in the eternal order of things—will be the rediscovery of the absoluteness of God. Only a Church inspired with a God-consciousness will be power-conscious to act upon while living serenely above the world.

Such a conception as the absoluteness of God needs, however, to be guarded from misunderstanding. The Oriental idea of God has more than once resulted in a paralysis of human endeavor. A conception that absorbs man into Deity, that reduces life to absolute quiescence will gain little influence in the Western world because it is contrary to our genius. I am not thinking of an idea of God reached through prolonged brooding on the mystery of existence that reduces

man's personality to nothingness, but of the conception of God revealed by Jesus Christ. In him we live and move and have our being. Only within the limits of this mighty faith can man find himself. Our destiny must be fulfilled within two environments —time and eternity—but awareness of the eternal only can give man the mastery over the temporal order. As Carlyle once observed: "We cannot stand firm in time until we have gained a foothold somewhere beyond time."

This assured conviction cannot be reached directly by philosophy, although I am inclined to think that the final positions that develop from the new conceptions of science will support the belief. Neither can we gain the conviction through unregulated mystical processes. It can arise only from a quickening of faith in a revelation of God. If God be what we hope he is, we must believe that he will take the initiative, that he will disclose himself to man. The conviction which lies at the roots of Christianity is the belief that God has manifested himself in Jesus Christ. That conviction,

founded upon historical manifestations and confirmed in spiritual experience, has so far sustained itself in face of a changing temporal order. Its vitality flows from the eternal reality of God.

How can the Church bring home to the distressed modern heart the life-giving hope of a Divine initiative? If loss of faith in progress has seriously impaired confidence in the social program and turned man's thoughts toward the inner life until he has become conscious of tragic needs which in turn have destroyed individual hope and made deliverance a necessity, where shall the Church place the emphasis in the hope of quickening interest in its message and constraining the world again to regard the gospel as the good news of God?

That a reformation will issue from the present renaissance is the belief of many. But we shall not live to see it. Our share will not be in the reaping, but in the sowing; but this will not lessen our courage if we have a vision beyond the immediate present that is grounded in the eternal order. Our concern should be: can we discern

the signs of the times? Are we capable of interpreting the deeper trends of our age so as to select those essential truths which shall best prepare the Church for the great awakening in the future? In times of epochal change God shakes all things into simplicity, and the things that cannot be shaken are usually the simple things.

What, then, are these simple things? Who can tell? One must be guided by practical experience, for we can speak only of that we do know. The convictions that have sustained my faith in the midst of the sharp stresses and strains of the time have centered around three ideas: Christianity is not a religion of demands, but a religion of invitations; it is not a religion of exclusions and denials, but of inclusions and affirmations; it is not a religion that remains indifferent to man's earthly lot, but must penetrate human societies with the ideal of the Divine kingdom. But that kingdom is not of this world. It is never the same thing as a civilization or a culture. It lives amid all mutations because it is rooted in the Divine intention. Such a gospel calls forth a

Church, a communion of typical personalities living above, but emphatically within the world, with power to sanction natural virtues and cultivate normal affinities through the spiritual resources at its command.

Christianity is not a religion of demands, but a religion of invitations. A demanding religion develops from the degradation of a noble ideal. Religion to be genuine must possess sufficient authority to influence conduct. But what, after all, is conduct? Is it conformity to an external rule or the manifestation of an inward disposition? Is it agreement of man's actions with the rule of right or a disclosure of harmony between the human spirit and the will of God?

In the beginning it was necessary that religion should express itself in rules and regulations, but this provisional discipline was designed to educate the human spirit and adjust it to an inner harmony between man and God. For law is limited to outward behavior. It cannot effectually influence the inner life, since it terminates on actions and has no authority over thought or inten-

tion of mind. To found religion finally on law is to expose it to degradation. The perversion of law often leads to immoral conformity. The fate of Judaism when it parted with its prophetic character shows the futility of a demanding religion. Yet this degrading influence has persisted until now and must be sharply reckoned with if we are to apprehend aright the simple nature of the Divine initiative. For if God disclose himself as a Lawgiver and nothing more, then there is indeed no solace and no encouragement in religion for a hard-pressed nature.

If law could have saved humanity, then there had been no need for Christ. Yet the surviving influence of Puritanism in our time has more than once tended to transform Christianity into a demanding religion and to associate it with two evils which have led to the corruption of the Church. One is the tendency to make religion terminate on conduct as an end in itself instead of going deeper to reconcile man to God in the inner regions of the soul. It has also encouraged the belief that the function of

religion was to make man comfortable in the world. If one conformed to current demands, accepted external standards, and followed the bent of popular opinion, there was little else in religion to be concerned about. That is why, when caught in the grip of life's graver meanings, so many look for answers to their needs in something other than religion.

Christianity is a religion of comfort, but not of comfortableness and has only an indirect connection with conduct. It is a religion of love, not of law, and the power of its appeal, the very essential disclosure of God at the highest in Christ, is a wide invitation to enter freely into the Divine life. More than once preachers of this doctrine have been charged with antinomianism. It was a favorite criticism of the Judaizers in Paul's time, and it has been repeated again and again simply because it is easy to imagine that a religion of law is more potent than a religion of love. Yet a religion that terminates on conduct can never touch the deeps of the soul. Love only can do this, and only when man sees in the generous in-

vitation of the gospel the revelation of the Divine initiative. If Christ affirmed the absoluteness of God, if it be true that man depends entirely upon the grace of God for salvation, yet this humiliating truth was always associated with the generous invitation to come unto God, showing the perfection of Divine Sovereignty in the fullness of the appeal. God desires religion to be founded on grace alone, since the only pure loyalty is founded upon love. I am pleading, then, for a wholesome return to the simplicities of the redemptive gospel, for from such reflections we shall gain power rightly to reexamine our Protestant heritage.

It is evident that while the reformers thoroughly purged Jewish and pagan elements from the traditional faith their successors brought back a definite note of legalism, so that the ultimate effect tended to transform Christianity into a religion of demands.

This later type of Protestantism has been too much occupied with legal terms, with forensic conceptions in theology, with codes

of morals, with authoritative and dogmatic presentations of truth. This tended to externalize Christian thought and exposed it to an easy accommodation to the spirit of the world. The simplified emphasis must be placed upon the outstanding New Testament fact that Christianity is not a religion of demands, but a religion of invitations; that while God alone is the author of salvation he offers it to men of a certain eagerness of soul: "Unto as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." I should like to see our preaching preoccupied with the conclusion that Christianity is a religion of redemptive love, a love finally and adequately manifested in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Once to accept the generous invitation is to impose an authority upon mind and spirit more potent and rational than any kind of external ecclesiastical demand. For the constraint of Christ is an inward constraint, the constraint of the Cross: "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price." This is our gospel,

our message, the inspiration of our ambassadorial authority.

The outstanding characteristic of the great reformers—of Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin, as indeed it was of Paul and Augustine—was not theological power or reforming zeal, but downright simple piety. They were first of all religious souls. They were what they were by the grace of God. This, and this alone, was the inspiration of their labors. Yet it is this that we have missed in the modern Church. We have been more conscious of our theological systems, our ecclesiastical institutions, our relation to the visible societies in which we live than of God and the relation of the soul to the Redeemer. Yet the deep questionings of the modern mind, the pathetic hungers of the modern heart are all tending to this very thing: to find, "amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing," the healing ministry of grace which shall lead the lonely home.

We must interpret the spirit of religion so as to set forth the inclusive character of spiritual life. The criticism has often been made that the Reformation stressed the

truth and goodness of religion, but neglected to cultivate the beauty of the world. This is often justified in the barren type of worship realized in many Protestant communions, to say nothing of the hideous architectural types achieved in association with the stern and lofty morality of the reformed faith. Yet has not religion ever been the Mother of the Arts? Shall we not discern in the expanding life of the soul a proper place for cultural disciplines?

Christianity is not a religion of repressions and denials, but of affirmations: "I am come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly." Its formula is: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good; be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit." It aims to turn destructive forces into constructive forces, to beat swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks. I should like to see the gospel of redemption preached to our eager modern world in intimate association with an enthusiasm for all forms of genuine culture and producing such fertile personalities as to penetrate secular activi-

ties with an unearthly sense of glory attached to spiritual values and experiences.

Modern culture that has separated from its spiritual home and still endeavors to sustain its vitality in some phase of humanism is very like a child's garden. The flowers are beautiful when first they come in dewy freshness from the womb of the morning, but when the noonday sun falls on them they wither because they have no root in themselves. A discerning mind knows that they were nurtured in another soil—a garden of the soul, fertilized by spiritual aspiration.

If the Church can demonstrate the historic truth that religion is the Mother of the Arts, it will summon back to the service of God the legitimate children of the religious spirit now finding no home and no welcome amid the crowded ways of barbarian efficiencies, from the tyranny of which all refined dispositions are turning with loathing and distaste. Until intelligence returns to the sanctuary of God to learn how to worship and to brood and to dream, there is no hope of delivering man's mind from the

plague of frog philosophers that now fills the world with the repulsive odor of the swamp.

I should like to see the moral dynamic of Christianity rigorously applied without fear of consequences to the society of man. The Church has been deplorably weak in its influence upon social trends, not always because it did not suggest interesting and true ways of dealing with them, but because it lacks a spirit to get its contentions listened to and respected. The modern Church has been too comfortable; too much at home in the world; too well fed and well housed; in a word, it has been content to dwell at ease in Zion. We have forgotten that our task is to set captives free, to open blind eyes, to visit the unfortunate in sickness and the criminal in prison; and above all to preach a gospel of deliverance to the poor. There is necessity that we simplify our baggage, for at present we are so expensive, and so well settled, that we are actually dependent upon the very world that we are supposed to redeem.

The time has come to resume the rôle of

a pilgrim Church, capable of living upon spiritual resources and asking of the world only the right to do our work well. We should seek to impose, by sheer weight of spiritual singularity, the moral principles of Christ upon a godless industrial society; to change the modern conception of rights and values; to become the uncompromising opponents of war and of national aggrandizements; and so by growing in the timeless elements of our faith rise above the limitations of race, and clan, and country, to a fresh realization that the Church of Christ is a congregation of the righteous, and that the kingdom of God is not of this world. Thus should we invite the social passion of the age to return to its ancient home, a passion that has too long worked at cross purposes to the Church, yet incapable of attaining its ends without a spiritual motive and a religious dynamic.

Once again the human race is on its travels. If the consequence of the renaissance was to turn man from God to the world, the effect of the coming renaissance will be to turn man from the world to God;

for the hideous image of secularism—symbol of the material culminations of the renaissance—is tottering on its throne, and man again is in quest of God and trying to find his way home. What interpretation then shall best guide him on his way? Upon what kind of teaching will such a questioning mind nourish itself? Will it not be that conception of God which shall afford man an experience of religious reality in the deepest emotions of the soul? I am convinced with the utmost assurance, and I hope with becoming humility, that the type of religious teaching best suited to restore the modern man to confidence in the living God is to be found in the fundamental principles of our reformed faith. It is and probably shall ever remain the faith of a minority; but it has happened once, and will happen again, that from the minority have come the pathfinders for all the rest. The destiny of men is in the hands of their leaders, and the reformed faith has ever been the faith of directing intelligences, whether in the councils of nations or in the gatherings of the Church.

CHAPTER VI

THE CHOICE BEFORE US: ALTAR OR PULPIT?

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It is a critical moment in the life of a traveler when he has to choose his way. The path is not always clear. When, like Dante, he finds himself in a dark wood where the right way is lost, what is he to do? The natural impulse would be to summon his convictions to his aid. He would put certain questions to the fore and ask: What is his goal? Why did he set out on pilgrimage? What principles have aided him so far to believe he was going in the right direction? The scrutiny of motives at such a time is a step in the direction of a more definite principle of guidance. He will fall back upon the spirit of the movement of which he is a part, for the genius of an idea system which initiates a pilgrimage does not become clearly defined until one has gone a great way toward the goal of his hopes. The more thoroughly a man understands the spirit, the more determined will he become to finish what he has begun.

This chapter is an attempt to describe the spirit of Protestant religion. We have traveled over a crowded roadway where much has been neither clear nor dark. We have looked upon disturbing things; we have doubtless felt some misgivings, for I have intentionally pressed heavily upon the side of adversity, because I am convinced that only those who determine to face the grave conditions of the time will appreciate the immense encouragements that arise from the basal conceptions of our religion.

We are living in a spiritually distressed world. Change and instability are provocative of much reflective thought among all classes of people. Each is asking himself: What is my relation to the present state of society? What is the value of my personal beliefs and professional ambitions? What do I believe about life, about God, about the Christian gospel, and why do I believe it? Assuming that one has any convictions at all, how can they be made effective in the service of mankind?

Such reflections are peculiarly disturbing to ministers of the gospel, not only because

it is just now more difficult to interpret the gospel to society, but also because the function of the minister is misunderstood and by many supposed to be unsuited for effective usefulness in these times. In an age of specialization the minister is called upon to justify his vocation. The function of the lawyer, physician, and business man is fairly well understood, but the ministry at present confronts a body of opinion which questions the legitimacy of the calling. Such opinions are bound to influence the minister, and, unless he have resources within himself and understand the needs of his generation somewhat better than others, he is likely to lose heart.

But this searching of heart is a necessary discipline. If one cannot run with footmen, how is he going to contend with horses? And if in an open country he flees like a frightened rabbit, how will it be in the jungles of the Jordan? Conditions that discourage the weakling are the inspiration of the strong man. The strength of the soul lies in its guiding principles and in the spirit of the movement in which it finds its

life. Believe in these, and a man can look with a cool and hopeful mind upon the changes and distresses of his time.

The direct way to discovery of new resources lies in a reconsideration of the responsibility of leaders. The Bible draws a sharp distinction between the shepherds and the sheep. Ordinarily God is interested in the doings of the sheep and the misdoings of the shepherds. The reason is obvious: it is the duty of the sheep to follow and of the shepherds to lead. The success of any movement depends on the fidelity of leaders. Humanly speaking, the Church of Christ can never be stronger than its responsible directors.

There are two prime qualities which distinguish a leader of this type. One is that he accepts responsibility as absolute and not relative; the other is that he is determined to make opinion and not to follow it. He is the only man in human societies who can never make adverse conditions a reason for deserting his post. In praise or in blame, in sunshine or in rain, in darkness as in light, he must stand by the flock.

Moreover, he is an authority on pasturage. He gives the sheep what they need and not what they think they want. The security of the flock and not the status of the shepherd is the single principle by which he will be judged.

The absence of these qualities explains the failure of many in the ministry of today. The shepherds are often as unstable as the flock. Incapable of meeting the test of the prime, easily diverted from the true path as soon as it becomes difficult, too fond of echoing the ill-digested opinions and vagrant fancies of the sheep, many lose heart precisely at the moment when the glory of the calling should be manifest. Yet how can a man know his temper unless he is tried in the fire? And what service can he give to the sheep by shrill shoutings of doubts and fears from the housetops when he professes to be the one man who knows the way to green pastures and still waters? The want of noble hardness in the man and absence of authenticity in the voice often render the Word of God unconvincing to those who stand most in need of it.

The minister is a leader and must learn how to stand alone. But to fulfill this function he must have such convictions of the primacy of his vocation as shall clothe his influence over the flock with authority. Without this he will be weak and fickle, dependent on the whims and fancies of the crowd, and, having no anchor within the veil, he will be carried about by every wind and wave of doctrine.

The stability of the leader, his courage and assurance when standing at the cross-roads, to take the right path, will arise from personal convictions, but his authority will be augmented if he understands the spirit of the movement of which he is a part. People who have been associated for some good purpose and who have suffered hardship and made sacrifices for their ideals have been able to reduce the essential meaning of their objective to a simplicity. The all-sufficient reason for a movement is its genius, its animating spirit.

What is the spirit of the Protestant religion? What is the irreducible minimum which, after all other elements are abstract-

ed, gives character to the whole? I believe it to consist in the prophetic as contrasted with a priestly conception of religion. It seeks not certainties based on semi-magical ritual practices, but is content with a high degree of probability based upon increasing moral certitudes which arise from faith and experience—faith in the continuous guidance of the Holy Spirit and experience of an abiding life in a world of constant change. Hence, instead of turning back to safety when conscious of increasing pressure from without, it looks forward to living dangerously and finds its hope and inspiration in the competence of the Holy Spirit to mold its life in the image of its Divine Master. In other words, Protestantism is the effort to recover from the traditions of the past and to manifest in the life of the present the spirit of Apostolic Christianity.

The distinctive aspect of this conception becomes evident in a contrast between two impulses referred to in a previous chapter. One is the impulse to travel through the world in search of a distant goal, the other

to settle down within the world. Yet, curiously enough, in their ultimate manifestations they almost appear to reverse their interests—one goes forth to meet the world, the other retreats from the world. One is the passion for the arena, the wish to develop character amid the pressures of life, the other the passion for the nest, a retreat into something that will shelter the mind and safeguard the spirit from the rude assaults of the world. One desires to live dangerously, the other to live safely. One is the progressive impulse incited by the ambition to advance, the other the conservative impulse inspired by a loss of nerve; and both have had a powerful influence on religious life from the beginning of the Christian era.

In Apostolic times there was a Jewish-Christian and a Gentile-Christian Church—one clinging close to Palestine and ancient Hebrew tradition, the other, under the leadership of Paul, going boldly out to meet the world. The Palestinian type loved the nest; the Pauline type sought the arena. It was a great moment in history when the

apostles turned their backs on the attractions of the sheltered life and went forth to preach the gospel to the Gentile world. They had a story to tell which they believed would change the fate of mankind and accomplished their purpose because they were fully in sympathy with the will of their Divine Master. They were men of the message—preachers and teachers—aflame with patriotic fervor, and derived their authority from the Great Commission. They deliberately sought to live dangerously, accepted hardships as a matter of course, and carried the movement to the heart of the civilized world because they convinced their generation that they were heralds of a message of transforming power.

But after the Apostolic Age a change came over the Church. Amid cooling enthusiasms, increasing worldly opposition, and divided counsels, the people began to turn to the idea of a shelter. This impulse to retire from the world gave rise to asceticism and monasticism and was due to a distinct loss of nerve. The movement was a withdrawal from intimate contacts with life

toward the protection of an ecclesiastical institution. Priestly ministries and ritual performances were more appealing to this temperament than prophetic leadership and living thought. The men of the message—exponents of the evangelical spirit—were superseded for the most part by men of the institution. The great words, "Go ye into all the world," were changed to, "Come ye into the Church." A tired, tempted, disenchanted people found shelter within its hospitable walls. This is what a modern writer calls "second religiousness," the impulse to decline the struggle with life in favor of a form of protection afforded by a theological symbol or an ecclesiastical institution. This impulse beyond doubt arises from a failure of nerve. It draws man back toward safety rather than impelling him on to live dangerously. The struggle between the prophetic and priestly spirit finally led to the triumph of the latter, which reached its climax in the great ecclesiastical establishment of the Middle Ages.

No one can read the New Testament without realizing that this later development

was not contemplated by Christ or the apostles. There was a movement before there was a literature or an institution. That which created the Church was the Living Word preached by the bold missionaries, whose steadfast spirit carried the gospel to the center of Roman civilization. The loss of nerve which developed the ecclesiastical institutions of the Middle Ages was a definite departure from the norm, and the Reformation was an intelligent rejection of this type in favor of that found in the New Testament.

The ruling principle of the Reformation opposed itself to the priestly type of Church. It saw the world as an arena in which faith and life should develop in intimate contact with the experience of mankind. It was sublimely prophetic, a reaffirmation of the evangelical position, and it is to this type of religion that the Protestant Church belongs.

It is proper, however, to observe that certain differences appear in the Protestant bodies which trace their origin to the Reformation. Some followed the ecclesiastical

tradition, emphasizing the idea of the Church ritual, priestly ministries, and gradations of clergy. The chief fear of this branch is schism in the visible body of Christ. Others followed the evangelical tradition, relying on preaching and teaching. Rejecting the priestly character of the ministry, this branch was less concerned with divisions in the visible body than with false teaching. In other words, the priestly type emphasized sacraments and ecclesiastical institutions, while the prophetic type concentrated on the broad historical meaning of the evangelical tradition, and being, as the reformers advised, much given to prophesying, developed a thoughtful, practical way of looking at religion.

I am far from suggesting that it is impossible to associate a priestly and prophetic type of ministry in the same ecclesiastical family; but I am thoroughly convinced that, if given the full force of their respective spirits, they become mutually exclusive. Both types have been serviceable in religious history, but they have best served the world when kept distinct. In so far as they are

associated together they lead to a mixed type of Protestantism which tends more and more to become less like the original tradition. And when this association is long continued it produces instability in the ministry and uncertainty in the testimony of the Church. On the one hand it leads to egocentric rationalism, on the other to abortive efforts to unite with Rome.

This strange ambiguity is responsible for present-day confusion as to the authority of the ministry. In the long run the world is best served by those minds that are fully committed to a definite conception of function. Men can understand the priest; they can understand the prophet; but they are apt to become confused when they see the same man trying to be both priest and prophet, yet uncertain as to which is more important. To-day men see the minister a priest before an altar; to-morrow he is a prophet in the pulpit. But when he stands midway between altar and pulpit, uncertain which is the more significant, the world is likely to question an authority so unsure. On this account it seems to me that the best

service of the Church to our distracted age would be a definite and unmistakable setting up of the contrast between a priestly and a prophetic conception of religion.

It is for this that I am pleading here. Pure Protestantism, inspired by the evangelical tradition and functioning through the might of the prophetic conception of the ministry, needs no altar other than that of the contrite heart and no priesthood other than that of all believers. In so far as we are loyal to this conception we shall fulfill our function in present-day life. In stating this principle I am not suggesting that we should oppose a priestly type of ministry or Church. For multitudes this is the only sure way to find God. But I am affirming with the utmost seriousness that a return to the prophetic function of the ministry and the acceptance of the limitations set by the spirit of Protestantism is the best way to recover authority for the type of Church that developed from the Reformation.

The supreme function of the Church is worship. Worship is the accomplishment of something real, the effectual union of man

with God on terms which God has provided. Unless this be true, worship is an illusion. It may be a reaction of the soul toward the mystery of the universe, but it can never have the concrete quality which a union of the tragic element in human life has with that element in God more tragic still. Worship, then, is essentially an experimental participation in the Deed of God. But the Deed of God upon which worship depends must be redemptive. It is, as Forsyth has suggested, "a communion with the finished will of God in Christ."[1] The Cross is central to every legitimate experience of worship and adoration. It is the Deed of God through which the soul is exercised in wonder, love, and praise. Christ on the cross is God coming to a focal point in human history, the event in the light of which man can never again be uncertain as to the Divine disposition toward him or ignorant of the conditions upon which he may commune with God.

It is for such assurance that man longs

[1] "Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind," 1907, chapter III.

and strives; it is the goal of his hopes to which every act of faith points. It inspires man's inquiry, invites his trust, and gives assurance that he is actually in communion with God. The word we may use, when we dislocate it from many confusions, is sacramental—an ineffable experience of something unworldly, mystical, spiritual that brings the whole nature of man into communion with the whole nature of God.

The question is: Where does this sacramental communion center? Upon what act or attitude or word does it rest? The answer of the Roman Catholic Church is the mass. Here, by an effective invocation, bread and wine are transformed into the body and the blood of Christ, the very act of the atonement is accomplished, and its virtue imparted to the worshiper by the officiating priest. This is priestly religion in its most definite and unambiguous form; and I am not going to argue that this conception is foreign to the New Testament, but rather to insist that it is wholly contrary to the genius of Protestantism. On this account reunion between the Protestant and

Roman type of religion on the basis of a priestly ministry of this type is wholly foreign to our spirit and quite beyond our power. The position of Rome is understandable and of immense service to multitudes of people. But what I am pleading for is that we, too, have a conception as definite as that of the Roman mass, and loyalty to it is the surest way to recover a sense of authentic mission in these times.

A point of consequence to observe is that, even in so potent a conception as the Roman mass, human nature is used as a means of communication of something divine. The consecrating words of the priest, according to that belief, convey to the material elements power to transform them into the body and blood of Christ. And upon this Deed of God is founded the experience of worship and communion.

But if such an experience is possible under these conditions, is it not more reasonable to believe that when a man is wholly given up to communicate the Word of God, when he is engaged in preaching the gospel of salvation, he is actually participating in

a sacramental act far more significant than that of the Roman mass? If by words man can ordain material symbols, how much more can this be accomplished by preaching the word of life?

The spirit of Protestantism reduced to its essential meaning is the conviction that the Deed of God which gives a foundation for communion is in preaching the gospel of salvation to mankind. That is the evangelical tradition, and by this tradition Protestantism will stand or fall. Herein lies the logical contrast between the priestly and prophetic type of religion—one rests upon a sacramental symbol, the other upon the proclamation of the living word—and if both believe that the Deed of God which gives the world an assured standing ground for worship depends upon one or the other of these conceptions, then they are mutually exclusive and best serve mankind when they are kept entirely distinct. That is why I am insisting that the choice before us now is between the altar and the pulpit, between searching for the authentic way to God through sacramental symbols or in the proc-

lamation of the word of life in the name of Jesus Christ.

Preaching the gospel was the New Testament way; for, had there been no preaching and no living dangerously, there had been no called-out body to become a Church. The power of that preaching was derived from faith in the continuous ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers. The Spirit gave convincing potency to the word, and the Church grew about the word and from it derived its power to persist against the pressures of the time. This conviction beyond doubt is the surest way of establishing communion with the Divine will through Christ. It has not only the merit of historical priority—a fact of immense importance—but as being the power that called out and sustained the Church, without which sacraments would have had no meaning, it has the great merit of exercising living thought from generation to generation because it unites the mystical realities of religion with the expanding intellectual life of mankind. The genius of Protestantism has thriven best in living minds.

It is important to emphasize one aspect of the question. It is inconceivable that it should be necessary to repeat the actual sacrifice of Christ by a sacramental act like the Roman mass. That deed once for all was accomplished on Calvary. But it is essential that the power of the deed should be perpetuated and repeated in the life of the believer. The focal point in history, where God discloses his disposition toward sinful mankind, must be brought continuously into contact with human necessity, and this is accomplished by preaching the gospel as in no other way.

For it is not the sanctity of material elements, but the spiritual intention of the believer, that constitutes the mystical reality of worship. Preaching was the apostolic way of keeping alive the sense of communion with the finished will of God in Christ, and this is the supreme significance of the Protestant genius.

However, this has its perils. It may lead, as it often does, to an egocentric individualism that becomes indifferent alike to religious belief or spiritual organization. It

may tempt some to become detached particles whose zeal is inspired less by positive benefits than by distaste for creedal or institutional forms of religious expression. The priestly type has had for many the merit of positiveness in holding multitudes in visible organizations in face of social instability. The growth of individualism in our time has tempted some to speak of the break-up of Protestantism and others to associate with the evangelical tradition many attributes of the priestly type. Such, however, is characteristic of the enfeebled classes who have never taken the trouble to understand the spirit of Protestantism or, even if they understood it, have lacked the courage to live dangerously upon the undiluted resources of that type of faith.

But the corrective of this is to observe that the only preaching that is worthy of the name is the expression and the voice of the living Church. The teaching and influence of a preacher can never rise higher than the spirit of the Church he serves. He is the voice, but the Church is the channel of spiritual communication. We need at

present a genuine Church consciousness, an awakening to the fact that we are not isolated units in the scheme of things, but members of the body of Christ, a congregation of the Lord's people. It is only within this fellowship that preaching becomes mystical, potent, spiritually transforming—the living word of God.

The Protestant Church must recover its solidarity, and the best way is to reconsider its spirit. For a Church that believes in a continuous ministry of the Holy Spirit, that derives its enthusiasms from the common interests of Christ, that dares to live dangerously in face of all the conditions that prevail, will not lack authority to speak to the world's heart with the authentic voice of God.

The power of the Reformation was the simple reaffirmation of the truth that the message antedated the Church. There was a gospel before there was an organization; hence the original form of the Church was an association of believers going forth with a divine message to a lost world. The apostles and their immediate successors were

preachers, not priests. Oneness in Jesus Christ, the High Priest of our profession, the priesthood of true believers, the unity of the task to evangelize the world by going to it with a gospel of salvation, is our genuine apostolic succession—a succession in doctrine and fellowship. From this primal conviction we derive our Church consciousness and measure the vitality of communion with Christ by the thoroughness with which the Church carries its message to mankind.

I make no unfair claim when I say that Protestantism is the expression of this New Testament conception of Christianity. Everything that savors of ecclesiasticism, ritualism, sacerdotal ministries, gradations of clergy—everything, in fact, that subordinates the essential message, the good news of God—is alien to Protestantism, as indeed it is foreign to the New Testament, the charter of our faith and practice. The message carries with it the great truths of an open Bible, a divine Lord, an atoning Saviour, salvation by faith, a holy life by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and good

works wrought in the name of Jesus. This is the essence of our Protestant faith. We have the best reasons for holding it, and the essential expression of it is and must always be the preaching of the Word.

This is our historic position. What are some of the implications of it? The first may appear a little startling. It is frequently maintained that Protestantism is essentially democratic. If by this we mean that Protestantism created and sustains democratic forms of government, that it recognized and sanctioned individual rights and was ever on the side of religious and civil liberty, it is saying nothing but a truism. But if by democratic we mean that it requires little intellectual effort to be a Protestant, then something more needs to be said. For Protestantism was born in an intellectual and conscientious awakening when men were set thinking deeply and earnestly about the way of salvation, the meaning of the Church and spiritual doctrine, and its vitality was a union of intellectual and spiritual desire. It called men out of the moving mass, set them apart, alone with

God and with the Bible, and demanded that they think through to the roots the whole question of salvation. Hence, Protestantism lives by its doctrines, its teachings, its convictions, and, this being the case, it needs frankly to be said that Protestantism is a kind of culture, and it is best adapted to men who are willing to think personally and individually about their relation to God.

It is proper to say that, should the time come when the human race should refuse any longer to think about personal salvation, then Protestantism would cease to exist. The Talmud says that there is no place in this world for an ignorant Jew. We all know that one of the deepest influences in keeping up the racial solidarity of the Jewish people is the profoundly molding effect of their Talmud-Torah schools. It is just as true to say that there is no place in this world for an ignorant Protestant. A Protestant who has not some ideas, convictions, or persuasions of the truth of religion is as little related to the life of the Church as the ignorant janitor to the culture of a college.

A second inference is that the production of convictions which makes up the strength of the Protestant Christian is the specific work of preaching. Minds are rarely awakened by reading books; they respond in most cases to the living voice. Wisdom must cry from the street corner before she can speak to us from the printed page. It was Luther's clarion voice that set the German peasants to reading his Bible in the vulgar tongue. History is entirely on the side of what I am saying. Why was it that Pharisaism survived the fall of Jerusalem and Sadduceeism did not? It was because one was a man of the temple, the other of the synagogue; one had legs and could walk, the other had no legs, but was static like an egg waiting for a Roman to crack him. When Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jew sent about his wanderings, one of the apocalyptic writers wrote, "We now have nothing left but God's holy law," and yet from that came the Talmud and orthodox Judaism unto this day.

A third inference is that, granted an age of restless and keen intellect, where men are

set in search of guiding principles, and where the mind is hungering for spiritual nurture, there you will find an age passionately susceptible to preaching. And if we may say this about our age, then it stands to reason that Protestantism is the phase of religion most likely to influence effectively the thought currents of our time and to develop leaders and pathfinders for the new and inchoate society which is now so clamorous for competent guidance in the region of the unseen, the permanent, and the spiritually satisfying.

Protestantism is essentially the religion of self-selected convictions. Such convictions are chiefly formed by preaching, by the living voice—conviction begets conviction. In an intellectually restless age, conscious of its need for spiritual guidance, leadership belongs to the Church that meets the demand for conviction in a large and liberal way; hence the Protestant religion is best adapted to meet the requirements of the intellectually eager elements of modern society.

I wish now to sum up by saying that a

definite unashamed return on the part of the Protestant Church to this New Testament business of preaching the gospel is the best protection from the two most formidable dangers at present facing us. These dangers are the indifference of the thoughtful people to the Church and the confused conceptions of the function of the Church in society.

Our first task is to recapture the intelligence of the age and bring it back to Christ and the Church. It is a well-recognized fact that people do not bring their minds to Church, and many take the position that the Church has nothing to say about the tremendous practical needs of the present hour. Men are so obsessed with demands of the visible present that they cease to believe in the imminency of the eternal world. They say they do not hear the note of eternity in the Church, hence do not go there.

There is much to be said for this feeling. When conviction leaves the pulpit, intelligence goes out of the pew. I do not say that conviction has gone out of our pulpits, but I do say that frequently it would ap-

pear as if the courage of our convictions had departed from us. And this is not because we are less courageous than men of other times, but I trace it mostly to failure to keep our convictions in good working order. Our thinking is too partial, too hurried, and there is a want of deep moral passion about our advocacy of Christ that somehow makes the man in the pew feel that what we are speaking of is not very important anyway. He misses the note of realism in the Church which he finds, frequently to his hurt, in the rough and tumble of the week-day life.

We must return to our Bibles, faithfully cultivate the homiletic art, deepen and enlarge our spiritual experience, and recover the old great note of prophetic authority.

The confusion of the public is obvious from the growing criticism of what it is pleased to call our ineffectiveness. Secularists are demanding that the Churches be turned over to the state for the use of the people—let them become community centers; let them be used for public meetings and open discussions and the like. These

interests are important, of course, but when they seek to take the place of the gospel they are little better than besetting demons. What we need is to get Christ so supremely set forth in our preaching as to include these interests, while at the same time consecrating them to higher uses so that men, hungry for God and more or less conscious of their needs, will see that the Church is independent of society because it is living from a holy center in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The widespread evidence in society of the breakdown of moral and spiritual tradition, the hectic character of amusements, the dominance of sex interest in pleasures, the collapse of the home life, the crass, unregulated selfishness and individualism, the impressionism that calls evil good and good evil—all indicate the downward tendency of the age, the riotous triumph of the animal over the spirit of man.

It is useless to expect society to heal its own hurt by any means it possesses. Its laws but reflect its desires, and where those laws are too far in advance of its powers and intentions they become mere invitations

to lawlessness. It is useless to look for aid from popular education as represented by journalism and magazines, or even polite human intercourse, for these are but echoes of crowd passions and desire. It is worse than useless to look for help from the sterile influences of secular culture. What is needed is to recognize that this strong tendency downward is the evidence of a force. It is the downward force of a race without hope save in the mercy of God.

The whole matter comes back to the leadership of the Church. The people are perishing for lack of knowledge—knowledge of God and his Christ. This downward force must and can be met with another and greater force, the power of a holy and sacrificial love. This power must appear first in the flaming conviction life of the Church, in a courage that will never yield to clamor nor faint from long-continued neglect. A gospel that transformed Corinthians into saints of God, that turned the currents of the Middle Ages from corruption into new life and spiritual vigor, brought forth our modern free institutions and established our

religious traditions, can again transform the life of peoples into communities of worshipers, children of light and of the resurrection.

A concluding word is concerned with the hope that we shall be faithful to our type.

Our genius is to live dangerously. We cannot take shelter in ecclesiastical institutions or beureaucratic organizations. We must live in the open air and in all weathers. If we draw back from the austerity of our principles, we are not good Protestants. In times of epochal change we are tempted to lose our nerve and retreat from reality toward some kind of shelter. Some find it in a rigid dogmatic system, others within the placidity of a single racial type. If we are to survive, this is something we must never do.

The weakness of the Church at the close of the nineteenth century, as a modern philosopher has observed, was its acceptance of the ideal of comfortableness in which religious peace was identified with middle-class contentment. To such a temperament change of any kind is most disturbing. But

the age of comfortableness has gone—for this generation, gone forever. Society everywhere is characterized by profound instability. God is shaking down everything that can be shaken, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.

But it is a paradoxical feature of unshakable things that they are susceptible to surface alterations. The kingdom of God is founded upon the seas and established upon the floods. The elasticity of its form is quite consistent with the durability of its plan. The divine intention is manifest not in static, but in dynamic and growing realities. The nineteenth-century Church accepted comfortableness because it was still living in undisturbed areas, but the Church of the twentieth century faces change in all phases of society. The great inertias, like race and sex, are changing, and no one can predict the character of the world in the immediate future.

The instability of the present is a challenge to the Church as drastic as that of the first century. But it must not fear alterations in the face of society. Because its

foundations are secure, it can well afford to be sympathetic toward movements on the surface. It must not be afraid of living thought; it must be generous in accepting truths from any quarter; it must never retreat toward any kind of shelter in the interests of living safely. It must wholeheartedly determine to live dangerously, keep in close contact with living generations, and advance with the moving tide, remembering that it is a pilgrim Church—asking the way to Zion with its face thitherward—ever setting its affection on the Divine Master, yet humble enough to inquire the way of all that can direct it aright. In view of the fact that Protestantism expresses the original intention of the Reformation, I am convinced that it has a great mission in our time, provided we have the courage to follow its spirit without misgiving and live in harmony with its principles with an undaunted determination to endure until the end.

The spirit I should like to see in the Protestant Church as it faces the awe-inspiring difficulties of the modern world

may be expressed in a story: Hilaire Belloc is, among other accomplishments, an experienced mountaineer. On one occasion he invited a friend, unfamiliar with mountain craft, to go with him on a walking tour over the Pyrenees into Spain. On the first stage of the journey they were unexpectedly compelled to spend the night near the summit of a lofty peak. They lay down on a narrow ledge and, covering themselves with their meager garments, waited for the day. Toward morning a great storm arose, and the fierce wail of Euroclydon aroused the neophyte from a troubled sleep, who, shaking his friend into wakefulness, said in a trembling voice: "I think it is the end of the world!" *"O no,"* replied the veteran, *"this is how the dawn comes in the Pyrenees!"*

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